MUSEUM OF EARLY SOUTHERN DECORATIVE ARTS

THE JOURNAL OF EARLY SOUTHERN DECORATIVE ARTS

November 1994 Volume xx, Number 2
The Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts

The *Journal of Early Southern Decorative Arts,* published twice yearly by the Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts (MESDA), presents research on decorative arts made in the South prior to 1820, with an emphasis on object studies in a material culture context. Queries relating to submissions, book reviews, and other editorial matters should be sent to the Editor, *Journal of Early Southern Decorative Arts,* MESDA, P.O. Box 10310, Winston-Salem, North Carolina 27108-0310.

The views expressed here are solely the responsibility of the contributors.

MESDA is an educational institution with the established purpose of collecting, preserving, documenting, and researching representative examples of southern decorative arts and craftsmanship from the 1600s to 1820. The museum's collection and research facilities are open to the public for general viewing and research.

MESDA is owned and operated by Old Salem, Inc., the nonprofit corporation responsible for the restoration and operation of Old Salem, a Moravian Congregation Town founded in 1766.

THE JOURNAL OF EARLY SOUTHERN DECORATIVE ARTS

November 1994 Volume xx, Number 2

The preparation of the *Journal* was made possible in part by a grant from the Research Tools and Reference Works program of the National Endowment for the Humanities, an independent federal agency.

Photographs in this issue are by the staff of the Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts except where noted.

Some back issues of the *Journal* are available.

Copyright © 1995 Old Salem, Inc.
Winston-Salem, North Carolina

Typeset by Kachergis Book Design, Pittsboro, North Carolina
Printed by Thomson-Shore, Dexter, Michigan

Contents

American Vernacular Furniture and the North Carolina Backcountry
MICHAEL H. LEWIS 1

Timber Available in Charleston, 1660–1820
BRADFORD L. RAUSCHENBERG 39

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2010 with funding from
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

http://www.archive.org/details/journalofearlyso2021994muse

American Vernacular Furniture and the North Carolina Backcountry

MICHAEL H. LEWIS

In the summer of 1981, the Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts (MESDA) acquired a walnut chest-on-frame (fig. 1). It represents a large group of similar pieces that share a backcountry North Carolina provenance. At the present, literally dozens of these chests-on-frame have been studied and recorded; however no maker, school of cabinetmaking, or exact date has been ascribed to the group. The only fact of relative certainty is that the chests come from piedmont North Carolina.

This article will explore the origins of the chest-on-frame in the MESDA collection, as well as those of a distinct group of Carolina backcountry furniture. Little is known about these chests-on-frame because of the relative lack of documentation and paucity of research devoted to them. Most modern research on the artisans of the North Carolina piedmont has, due to the extensive record keeping by the Moravians who settled on the Wachovia Tract in 1753, focused on Moravian furniture and decorative arts. This has created the biased view that no other cultural group produced artifacts worthy of study.[1]

Only thanks to the discovery of signed examples of furniture from this area, several non-Moravian cabinetmakers or cabinetmaking groups have been identified. James Gheen, a Pennsylvania-trained cabinetmaker, established a shop in Salisbury, North Carolina, and worked there in the last quarter of the eighteenth cen-

1. *Chest-on-frame, piedmont North Carolina, 1795–1830, walnut with yellow pine secondary. HOA 43⅞, WOA 39 3/16, DOA 20⅝. MRF S-11730.*

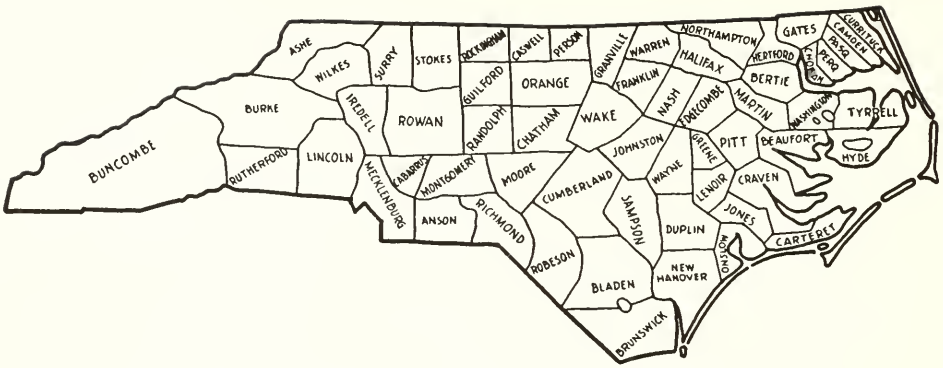
tury.[2] William Little was an English-born cabinetmaker who settled in the southern North Carolina piedmont at Sneedsborough in 1800. He is documented as working in both Norfolk, Virginia, and Charleston, South Carolina, prior to his move to the piedmont.[3] Jesse Needham, born in Pasquotank County, North Carolina, in the early 1770s, was probably trained as a cabinetmaker in coastal North Carolina and moved to northwest Randolph County around 1793.[4] John Swisegood established a significant school of

cabinetmaking in Rowan (now Davidson) County starting around 1817, influencing many artisans for decades.[5]

The group of furniture represented by the MESDA chest-on-frame exhibits several unusual characteristics that help to define it. Starting at the base, the trifid foot design, although somewhat crude on these pieces, has been identified as coming from Britain, most probably Ireland; it was used extensively in the Philadelphia area of southeastern Pennsylvania, as well as in Connecticut and parts of the southern colonies.[6] The deep drawer, called a bonnet drawer in the United States, has been traced to Great Britain, and the construction employed to support the bonnet drawer arrangement may also have its origin in the British Isles.[7] Eighteenth-century cabinetmakers in both New England and Pennsylvania used the chest-on-frame form extensively, and the construction practices found in most of the examples reflect an influence from these areas. The demographic makeup of the settlers of this specific region of North Carolina parallels the construction techniques used in these chests, which reflect cabinetmaking traits from other American colonies as well as Great Britain.

The large group of chests-on-frame in this study have oral histories that place their origins in the present-day counties of Randolph and Rowan (see fig. 2). When carefully examined, the group can be broken into two sub-groups named after these counties: the earlier Rowan type, and the Randolph type, which evolved from the Rowan type.[8] The Rowan type represents an eighteenth-century Anglo-American cabinetmaking tradition brought to the backcountry by immigrants from various parts of the American colonies and Great Britain. The Randolph type, an adaptation of these earlier designs, can be considered an excellent example of the American vernacular. Each type can be further divided according to stylistic variations.

The origins of the decorative arts tradition in backcountry North Carolina can be traced to the multi-ethnic immigration of the mid-eighteenth century. No one group, whether it be German, Scots-Irish, Scottish, Irish, or English, can be credited with an overriding influence on this tradition. To assist in attributing this group of chests-on-frame in question to one ethnic or religious



2. *Detail of a map illustrating the approximate county divisions in North Carolina c. 1800, by L. Polk Denmark. From David L. Corbitt,* The Formation of the North Carolina Counties, 1663–1943 *(Raleigh, N.C.: State Department of Archives and History, 1969). Reproduced courtesy of the North Carolina Department of Archives and History.*

group, school of cabinetmaking, or individual shop or artisan, an understanding of the immigration to this area is essential.

The backcountry of North Carolina was still a wilderness in the middle of the eighteenth century, and most of it remained relatively undeveloped until after the Revolution. The exceptions were the Moravian settlements at Salem, Bethabara, and Bethania; the Rowan County seat at Salisbury; Guilford Courthouse in Orange County; and the settlement at Hillsboro (see fig. 3).[9]

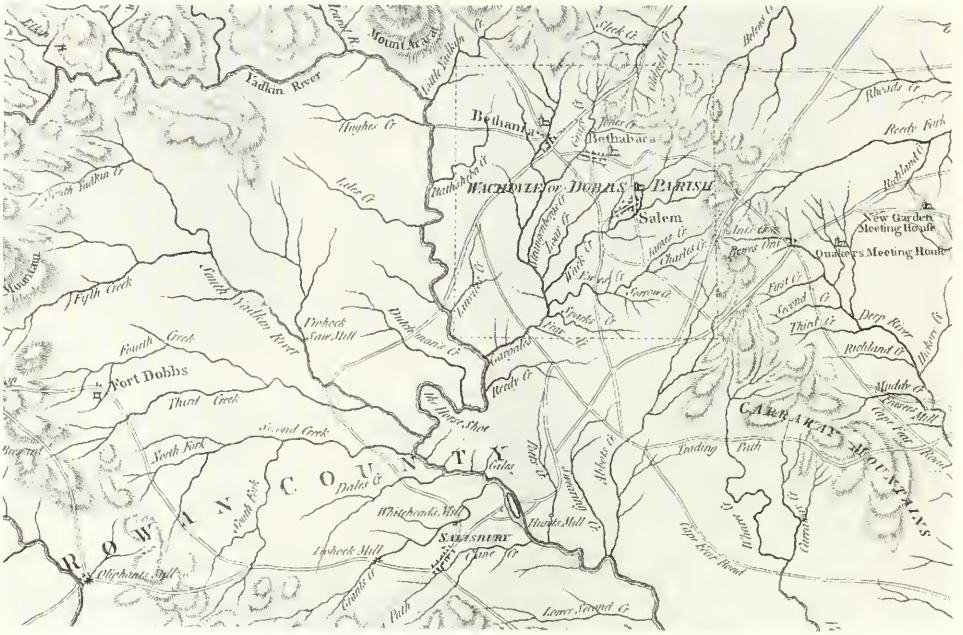
Settlement in this region was scattered and sparse prior to 1750. The years from 1750 to 1755 were a precursor to a large influx of immigrants, and the colonies that sent these early settlers were well represented in later migrations. During these five years came the organization of Rowan and Orange counties and the settlement of the Wachovia Tract by the Moravians in 1753.[10] According to historian James Whittenburg, "Between 1755 and 1766, the population of the province doubled as a consequence of the movement of people into North Carolina from colonies to the north. The backcountry was that part of North Carolina most directly affected by this great mid-century tide of immigration."[11] Outside the early centers mentioned above, settlers established several

other small, isolated communities in the region, including the Sandy Creek settlement and the Fourth Creek settlement. The Sandy Creek settlement was located in the central region of the backcountry on the Deep River, while the Fourth Creek settlement was northwest of Salisbury.

Historian David Hackett Fischer states that approximately 90 percent of the settlers to the backcountry were of English, Irish, or Scottish origin, and that actually a majority came from Ulster, the Scottish lowlands, and the north of England. (In the counties that bordered the Wachovia Tract, the percentage of Germans was probably higher.)[12] In his paper, "Colonial North Carolina's 'Burnt-Over District': The Pattern of Backcountry Settlement, 1740–1770," Whittenburg divides the North Carolina backcountry into three distinct sections based on the geographic origin of each area's population. "Middle colony men" settled the area west of the Yadkin River; they were comprised almost exclusively of Scots-Irish and German immigrants who streamed down the Great Wagon Road. The eastern section of the backcountry, starting at the headwaters of the Cape Fear River and ending in the northeast section of Orange County, was settled by colonists from Virginia, especially the Southside. In the central region between these two areas, these two diversely different cultures mixed, with unpredictable, sometimes violent, results.[13]

In the early 1750s, Shubel Sterns, a New Light, or Separate, Baptist minister from Tolland, Connecticut, in the Connecticut River Valley, established a settlement at Sandy Creek with, at first, a handful of his followers. The congregation was largely of Scots-Irish descent.[14]

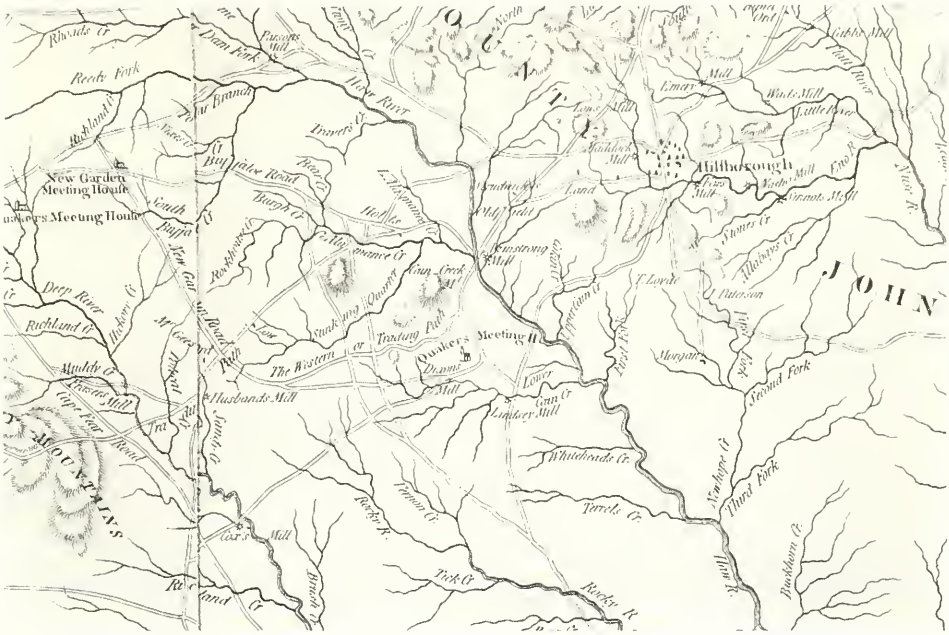
Also settling in the central zone of the backcountry during this period was the Society of Friends, or Quakers. Through their meticulous records we know that the Friends came from Pennsylvania by way of the Valley of Virginia.[15] Many of them were of Irish origin, first arriving in southeastern Pennsylvania in the first decade of the eighteenth century. Yet others were refugees from New England, fleeing the persecution that they suffered at the hands of the Puritans during the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.[16] These New England refugees first moved to southeast-



3a. *Detail of* An Accurate Map of North and South Carolina . . . , Henry Mouzon and others *(London: Rob't Sawyer and J. Bennett, 1775), illustrating settlements in the North Carolina piedmont at the end of the eighteenth century.*

ern Pennsylvania and eventually down the Great Philadelphia Wagon Road to piedmont North Carolina. By 1743 Irish Quakers had established a settlement at Carver's Creek in Bladen County, in southeastern North Carolina. "During the next twenty years Friends swarmed into the central sections of the latter state [North Carolina] and founded Cane Creek, New Garden [near present-day Greensboro], and a large number of other monthly meetings."[17] This establishes another connection with both New England and the British Isles and possible design sources for the North Carolina chest-on-frame.

These settlements illustrate a connection between New England and backcountry North Carolina. These settlers probably brought their cultural traditions with them, including those of the decorative arts, to the backcountry frontier. Stern's group of New Light Baptists grew rapidly, and by the end of the French and Indian War



3b.

it was a recognizable entity in the backcountry. Whittenburg observes that most of this growth came through "conversion." Anglican minister Charles Woodmason stated during his travels in western North Carolina just prior to the Revolution that "also a Great Number of New Lights and Independents come here from New England, and many Baptists from thence, being driven from, and not able to live there among the Saints [the Puritans]."[18]

By the time of the Revolution, the flow of immigration down the Valley of Virginia slowed somewhat, although now immigrants traveled down the east coast and swung west into the interior. Still others moved north from South Carolina along the Catawaba River, then overland to Salisbury.[19] The isolation of the backcountry was coming to an end. This post-Revolutionary society created the chests-on-frame that are the focus of this study.

Unless of great sentimental value, few pieces of furniture trav-

eled down the Great Philadelphia Wagon Road into the backcountry in the late eighteenth century. Case furniture especially demanded too much valuable room in a small wagon to be transported over crude roads from one colony to another. Therefore, eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century furniture with strong provenances in the backcountry are fairly certain to be of local manufacture. Using provenance, construction features, and evidence such as use of woods native to the South, as well as a body of stylistic characteristics, a profile of this furniture group can be developed.

The MESDA chest-on-frame, constructed in the late baroque style, has been dated to the first quarter of the nineteenth century by the presence of cut nails in its construction.[20] The primary wood is walnut and the secondary wood yellow pine, which indicates that it was probably constructed in the American South. A light frame consisting of four cabriole legs, ending in somewhat crudely formed paneled trifid feet (fig. 1a), supports the chest.

The sides of the case are fully dovetailed into the top and bottom, with the upper side joint concealed by a face-nailed molding and the bottom joint by the base molding attached to the frame section. The drawers consist of a walnut face board with a lapped thumbnail molding cut on the top and sides and a flush thumbnail molding on the base. The yellow-pine drawer sides are half-dovetailed to the walnut face board and full-dovetailed to the yellow-pine back board. The drawer front and side boards are grooved to accept the single beveled bottom board that passes under the rear board and is nailed only at this point.

This part of the chest-on-frame's construction is common, but the piece exhibits several unusual characteristics. The back consists of two vertical boards paneled into the top and sides and lapped under a vertical stile, which is also beveled at the top and fitted into the top's rabbet. All three members are pinned by wooden trunnels to the bottom board. The drawer configuration appears to be four small over two large, but the right pair of upper drawers actually form one large bonnet drawer, a deep drawer traditionally used to hold hats or bonnets. The drawer runners and guides for the upper drawers are attached to the front drawer

1a. *Detail of chest-on-frame in figure 1, illustrating the paneled trifid foot.*

blades, but are then mortised through the back's central stile (fig. 1b). In most chests, support for smaller upper drawers is usually provided by full or three-quarter dustboards or supports attached to the inside of the back of the case. This chest-on-frame has no dustboards, a characteristic usually associated with New England furniture.

The drawer configuration and the solution for the support of the drawer arrangement, the attempt at paneled trifid feet, and the use of the chest-on-frame form at this late date contribute to make this piece distinctive compared to most identified and documented furniture of backcountry North Carolina. An examination of each of these characteristics and a comparison of the chests with similar examples from other regions can help identify the cultural group associated with the group's creation.

A deep drawer for storing hats has been documented in parts of the British Isles as occurring by the early nineteenth century, and in 1833 drawers used for hat storage were described by John Claudius Loudon in his publication, *Encyclopaedia of Cottage, Farm and Villa Architecture and Furniture.*[21] In his article, "Scotch Chests," British furniture historian David Jones identifies a chest form with a deep drawer for storing hats, called a "lum chest," as a

1b. *Detail of the back of the chest-on-frame in figure 1, showing how the drawer supports were mortised through the back center stile.*

typical Scottish form. He states that the exact origins of this chest form with the bonnet drawer are not known, but echoes Loudon when he states,

> Certainly the small rural cottage or two-roomed urban tenement dwelling of the nineteenth century offered little space for a wardrobe and in Scotland, priority of space would, in many cases, have been given to other, more immediately functional types of furniture.... The 'Scotch Chest', with its flexible arrangement of drawers, would certainly seem to have offered an ideal wardrobe-substitute.[22]

Jones's idea of a "rural cottage" is easily transferred to the New World in the form of the "frontier cabin," whether it be of log or timber-frame construction.

The need for flexible storage may explain the bonnet drawer but it does not resolve the question of the construction used to support this drawer configuration. A high chest of drawers in the collection of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, purchased in

London, England in 1936, has its upper drawer supports mortised through the back in the same manner as the North Carolina chest-on-frame.[23] Although the lower section of the piece, probably of American origin, was "married" to the upper section at some earlier date, the upper section is of provincial British origin, possibly Scotland or Ireland. This section of the piece dates to the last half of the eighteenth century and establishes a precedent for this method of construction. The documented use of the bonnet drawer in Scotland and the practice of mortising the upper drawer supports through the back of the case in vernacular English furniture, as well as Scotland and Ireland, both illustrate unusual elements of the North Carolina chest-on-frame and firmly place its origins in the British Isles.

Another feature of the chest-on-frame has its roots in Great Britain. For many years, furniture historians have attributed the trifid foot to the Philadelphia area. In *American Furniture* decorative arts historian Helen Comstock states this, and further mentions that the foot was "frequently paneled."[24] David Stockwell attributes the paneling of the trifid foot, if not the trifid foot itself, to the fifteen hundred to two thousand Irish-Quaker craftsmen who immigrated to the Philadelphia area in the early eighteenth century.[25] Their early arrival placed these Irish craftsmen in Pennsylvania at the beginning of the late baroque period, if not sooner. From about 1720 until the end of the late baroque (or Queen Anne) period, the cabinetmakers of the Philadelphia area produced the cabriole leg with the trifid foot, as well as the claw and ball foot, on tables, chairs, and high chests of the period. Simultaneously, trifid-footed pieces began to be produced along the New England seaboard and in the Connecticut River Valley. It is important to note for future reference that New England cabinetmakers also used the claw and ball foot and the slipper foot, although the latter was almost exclusively confined to the Rhode Island area.[26] At the beginning of the rococo period around 1740, the trifid foot started disappearing in the coastal regions that would have been exposed to new design trends from Europe.

In the 1760s, the chest-on-frame with fully developed trifid feet and cabriole legs could be found in the Delaware Valley and shortly

4. *Chest-on-frame, Winchester, Virginia, area, late eighteenth century. Courtesy of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, acc. 1930-3.*

after that, in the Winchester, Virginia area, as another chest (fig. 4) in the collection of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation attests. The artifactual evidence suggests that at least a few of the Philadelphia- or New England-trained cabinetmakers or journeymen moved south along the Great Philadelphia Wagon Road. This journey eventually brought these artisans to the backcountry of North Carolina. This is readily illustrated by a chest-on-frame (fig. 5) with a provenance of Guilford County, North Carolina. The feet

5. Chest-on-frame, piedmont North Carolina, 1795–1830, cherry with yellow pine secondary. HOA 71½", WOA 42", DOA 24". MRF S-570.

MUSEUM OF EARLY SOUTHERN DECORATIVE ARTS

and legs demonstrate a strong Philadelphia connection, while the cornice reflects the Germanic element so influential in the backcountry.

As previously noted, the MESDA chest-on-frame does not have dustboards. This is also true of most of the chests-on-frame in both the Rowan and Randolph types. The few exceptions have full or three-quarter dustboards used mainly as drawer supports for the smaller upper drawers. In the southeastern Pennsylvania area,

6. Chest-on-frame, Deerfield, Massachusetts, area, c. 1769, cherry with white pine secondary. HOA 35¼", WOA 39½", DOA 23⅜". Courtesy of Memorial Hall Museum, Deerfield.

including Philadelphia, three-quarter dustboards were common, while in the Anglo-American South, as well as in Great Britain, full dustboards were usually preferred. Only in New England and sometimes New York was the total absence of dustboards the common practice.[27]

Chests-on-frame produced in New England during the second half of the eighteenth century exhibit similar construction features to the MESDA chest-on-frame. This group is best illustrated by a Connecticut River Valley chest-on-frame (fig. 6) in Memorial Hall Museum in Deerfield, Massachusetts. While its scale is different

and it exhibits more high-style characteristics, the construction of this chest-on-frame is very similar to that of the MESDA example. The chest is supported by a separate frame assembly consisting of four small cabriole legs with the rails mortised, tenoned, and pinned to the legs. The front rail has a central pendant and both the front and side rails have applied moldings on the top edge to conceal the open dovetails of the lower case. The drawer fronts are thumbnail molded and lapped on the top and sides and only molded on the bottom edge. The chest has no dustboards. Typical of New England are the exposed half-dovetail drawer-blade mortises and the scalloped top treatment.

The drawer configuration of the Deerfield chest-on-frame is identical to the Scotch chest described by Jones.[28] More important, however, is the discrepancy between the date that Jones ascribes to one of the earliest examples of this type he examined, from 1825, and the dates of the chest from Connecticut. The chest-on-frame from New England predates its Scottish counterpart by more than half a century, being dated ca. 1769 in two independent publications.[29] This does pose the question of the origin of the bonnet drawer: British colonial America or British Isles?

Another example, this one a chest-on-chest from coastal Connecticut, exhibits the use of the short, tightly curved cabriole leg and the thumbnail molded, lipped drawer front treatment common to all the Rowan type chests-on-frame.

The following two groups of chests-on-frame illustrate an evolution in vernacular furniture design. The Rowan County group, dating earlier than the Randolph County group, reflects a greater direct influence from their makers' places of origin.

THE ROWAN COUNTY GROUP

All the chests-on-frame with an apparent Rowan County origin can be broken down into three basic stylistic types. They are grouped together due to their common characteristics, most striking of which are size and proportions. The Rowan County types are stylistically dated between 1795 and 1830, although a later date of production is possible.

Of the eight Rowan type of chests-on-frame examined, the heights vary from 43¼" to 50⅞", with six of the eight within the two-inch range of 43¼" to 45¼". Interestingly, the two examples outside the two-inch range have much higher frames than the other six, measuring 47¼" and 50⅞" in height, respectively. Within each of these types, there is enough variation to suggest different artisans or shop practices, and therefore the three types. All three types, however, exhibit a common, overall design influence.

Only one example of a type I Rowan chest-on-frame (fig. 7) has been identified and examined. The drawer configuration is two small over three large, and the drawer supports are not extended through the back of the case. The major differences distinguishing

7. Chest-on-frame, Rowan type I, piedmont North Carolina, 1795–1830, walnut with poplar and yellow pine secondary. HOA 45½", WOA 40⅝", DOA 21". MRF S-15435.

8. Chest-on-frame, Rowan type II, piedmont North Carolina, 1795–1830, walnut with yellow pine secondary. HOA 44", WOA 39⅛", DOA 19½". MRF S-15426.

this piece from a type II chest, represented by the MESDA chest-on-frame, are the straight front skirt, heavier, better defined legs and trifid feet, and the chamfered and fluted vertical corner moldings that terminate in lamb's tongues at the upper and lower ends. The primary wood is walnut, while poplar and yellow pine are used as the secondary woods. Little is known about the history of the piece except that it had been purchased from a collector in the central region of backcountry North Carolina.

The MESDA chest-on-frame represents type II of the Rowan County furniture group. Another chest-on-frame (fig. 8) is, except

for its comma inlays on the drawer fronts, nearly identical to the MESDA example. The primary wood used in its construction is walnut, and the secondary wood is yellow pine. The chest is 44" in height, 39⅛" wide, and 19½" deep. The top is joined to the sides with concealed dovetails that are totally hidden by the face-nailed upper molding. The bottom is full-dovetailed to the sides. The central drawer supports and guides for the small upper drawers and the bonnet drawer are mortised through the central back stile (see fig. 1b). The two horizontal back boards are half-lap joined and nailed into rabbets cut in the sides. The back is then butted and nailed to the top and lapped and nailed to the bottom board.

The fronts of the drawers on this chest are solid walnut, ⅞" thick. The back, sides, and bottom pieces are of yellow pine. The walnut front boards, top, and side edges are rabbeted to lap over the chest front, while all four outer edges are thumbnail molded. The drawers' bottom boards run parallel to the grain of the drawer front. They are beveled on three sides and slide into grooves cut into the inside of the drawer front and sides. The back of the drawer bottom passes under the back of the drawer and is pinned with wooden trunnels. The runners for the drawers are the bottom edge of the drawer sides. All the drawers are dovetailed, with half dovetails for the front to sides and full dovetails rear to sides. Small wedges were used to tighten several of the dovetail joints.[30] The pulls are brass but may be replacements, since several of the chests-on-frame of the group were originally made with turned wooden knobs. The use of the comma inlay on the drawer fronts is very similar to the work of the Swisegood cabinetmaking group, which was also producing furniture in the region during this time period.[31]

Another type II Rowan chest (fig. 9) lacks a bonnet drawer. Its drawer configuration is two small over three large. Beyond this functional change, the piece exhibits most of the characteristics of the two examples previously described.

Several other type II pieces, apparently in original condition, have been observed but not examined thoroughly. One was discovered in central Virginia by a staff member from Colonial Williamsburg with walnut as the primary wood and a four-over-

9. Chest-on-frame, Rowan type II, piedmont North Carolina, 1795–1830, walnut with yellow pine secondary. HOA 47½", WOA 41⅛", DOA 19⅜". MRF S-15432.

two drawer configuration. It was not ascertained if the left upper drawers were of the bonnet type. The second was reported in an antique shop in Atlanta in 1985. This piece, with a two small over three large drawer configuration, retained its original turned wooden knobs. Its other memorable characteristic was an inscription which read, "Amy Hoffman . . . His comoat [*sic*] . . . 1826." Unfortunately, the name has yet to be placed in the backcountry of North Carolina during this period.[32]

The last chest (fig. 10) is in the collection of the Mint Museum of

Art in Charlotte, North Carolina. It has a history of being used in the backcountry of North Carolina, not far from its place of construction. It has two small over three large drawers, with lapped and thumbnail molded fronts. It also exhibits a straight front skirt and no central pendant. The molding profiles used on this chest-on-frame are similar to others in the group. The feet are blocked out and are not paneled, but due to the frame and leg construction this chest also is classified as a Rowan type II.

10. *Chest-on-frame, Rowan type II, piedmont North Carolina, 1795–1830, walnut with tulip poplar and yellow pine secondary. Dimensions not recorded. Courtesy of the Mint Museum of Art, Charlotte, North Carolina.*

11. *Drop-leaf table, Rowan type II, piedmont North Carolina, 1795–1830, walnut with yellow pine secondary. HOA 27¾", WOA 41⅝", LOA 45½" open, 18" closed. MRF S-15051.*

Some stylistic details typical of the Rowan type chests-on-frame have been found on at least one other furniture form produced in the North Carolina backcountry. A small group of tables with the same trifid foot configuration found on the Rowan chests-on-frame has come to light. It includes a drop-leaf table (fig. 11) that descended in a North Carolina family and is well-documented as being owned by a prominent eighteenth-century Scots-Irish family living in the Winston-Salem area. Its construction and design closely resemble types produced in the northeastern portion of the Connecticut River Valley in the mid-eighteenth century.[33] Two smaller tables, one probably a writing table with a thumbnail-molded rectangular top and drawer front (fig. 12), and a second, possibly a tea table with an oval top (fig. 13), have been documented in the region. All three tables have walnut as the primary wood and yellow pine as the secondary wood.

12. *Tea table, Rowan type II, piedmont North Carolina, 1795–1830, walnut with yellow pine secondary. HOA 26½", WOA 30½", DOA 21½". Photograph by O. O. Thompson, Charlotte, North Carolina.*

13. *Table, Rowan type II, piedmont North Carolina, 1795–1830, walnut with yellow pine secondary. Dimensions not recorded. MRF S-1263.*

The second group of chests-on-frame can be attributed to the Randolph County area, although several of the type I and all the type II pieces have been found farther west in the Iredell/Davie county area and may have been made there at a later date. These pieces were produced in the second quarter of the nineteenth century and are somewhat later than the Rowan types, but the periods of production do overlap to a certain extent. The construction details of this group are very similar to the Rowan group, but the overall stylistic interpretation of the Randolph type I examples is more simplistic (see figures 14, 15, 16, and 17). Instead of the tightly

14. *Chest-on-frame, Randolph type I, piedmont North Carolina, c. 1815–1850, walnut with yellow pine secondary. HOA 48½", WOA 41¼", DOA 18⅞". MRF S-15429.*

15. *Chest-on-frame, Randolph type I, piedmont North Carolina, 1815–1850, walnut with yellow pine secondary. HOA 45¾", WOA 41¼", DOA 19½". MRF S-20184.*

curved, short cabriole legs, they have straight legs that are chamfered on the two outside corners to within an inch of the floor, and then flare outward into a crudely shaped trifid foot. The front skirt of the frame is shaped with three lunettes, the central one sometimes extending farther down than the ones flanking it. The side skirts have a single small lunette in the center of the cutout. Several Connecticut River Valley pieces of the "on-frame" type have been noted as having these three lunettes cut into their front skirts.[34] These characteristics are unique to the entire Randolph type I group.

Drawer construction detail is kept to a minimum on the Randolph types as well. The thumbnail-molded and lipped drawer

16. *Chest-on-frame, Randolph type I, piedmont North Carolina, 1815–1850, walnut with yellow pine secondary. HOA 47½", WOA 41¼", DOA 18". MRF S-20183.*

fronts of the Rowan group are replaced by a scratch-beaded, straight front panel that slides in flush with the side of the case. The fit and finish of the dovetails, like all of the Randolph County chests, are cruder than the standards of the Rowan County examples; the endgrain of the boards was roughly cut and the fitted boards have not been planed smooth.

A variety of adaptations exists within the Randolph type I group. Of the seven documented examples there are four chests-on-frame of varying drawer configurations, one chest-on-frame with bookcase, and two blanket chests-on-frame. Two of the chests-on-frame (figures 14 and 16) have three small over three large drawers, as does the example with bookcase (fig. 18). One

17. Chest-on-frame, Randolph type I, piedmont North Carolina, 1815–1850, walnut with yellow pine secondary. HOA 54½", WOA 43⅞", DOA 19½". MRF S-15425.

chest (fig. 15) has two small over three large drawers, and the other (fig. 17) three small over four large drawers. The remaining two are the blanket chests, one of which is illustrated (fig. 19).

The case construction of the type II chest-on-frame is identical to the type I examples of similar form, but the two types differ drastically in frame design. Only three pieces of furniture fall into the category: one chest-on-frame (fig. 20), and two blanket chests, one of which is illustrated (fig. 21). The type II chest-on-frame links the two groups, although vastly more skill was required to execute the frame sections of the type II than the type I chests. These frames consist of two tightly curved front cabriole legs and

18. *Chest-on-frame with bookcase, Randolph type I, piedmont North Carolina, 1815–50, walnut with yellow pine secondary. HOA overall 84⅝", chest 47¾"; WOA 41", DOA 17⅞". MRF S-15436.*

19. *Blanket chest, Randolph type I, piedmont North Carolina, 1815–1850, walnut with yellow pine secondary. HOA 24½", WOA 49¼", DOA 21¼". MRF S-15431.*

20. *Chest-on-frame, Randolph type II, piedmont North Carolina, 1810–1830, cherry with yellow pine secondary. HOA 53⅛", WOA 40¼", DOA 22⅜". MRF S-20270.*

21. *Blanket chest, Randolph type II, piedmont North Carolina, 1810–1830, walnut with yellow pine secondary. MRF S-15433.*

straight, tapered rear legs. The side skirts are shaped with a large central lunette, while the front skirt tapers downward to a central inverted point.

In comparing the construction of the blanket chests from the Randolph types I and II, many differences can be noticed. Both use half-dovetails to join the sides to the front and back, although the pins are visible on the fronts of type I and on the sides of type II examples. The top of the type I examples (fig. 19) have separate mitered board ends running perpendicular to the grain of the top board. They are pinned to the main board with battens running front to back on the outer underside of each end. The type II top (fig. 21) consists of one board with an applied molding to the front and sides. The frames remain the distinguishing characteristic connecting these blanket chests to their respective types.

THE INFLUENCE OF JESSE NEEDHAM

One chest-on-frame (fig. 22) found in a private collection may offer a clue to the origin of these two major groups. This chest has

22. Chest-on-frame, Rowan type III, piedmont North Carolina, 1795–1830, walnut with yellow pine secondary. HOA 50⅝", WOA 38", DOA 18⅛". MRF S-15430.

been designated a Rowan type III. The top is half-dovetailed to the sides, and the exposed side dovetails are covered by the face molding nailed to the side and front of the top. The bottom board is full-dovetailed to the sides, with the exposed dovetails covered by the bed molding applied to the base frame. The back construction consists of two horizontal yellow pine boards, chamfered on the top and side edges and lapped in the center. They are nailed into rabbets cut in the top and side panels. The lower edge of the back overlaps the bottom board of the case and is nailed in place with square-headed cut nails. As previously mentioned, this type of nail

was not introduced into the backcountry of North Carolina until 1804, thus dating the piece to the post-1804 period. The drawer blades are set in dovetailed rabbets cut into the side panels with full dustboards for the top two small drawers and none in the rest of the case.

This example has an oral history of coming from the Uwharrie River Valley in northern Rowan County and was purchased at an estate sale in that area by the present owners. The case construction as described is identical to the Rowan type chests-on-frame. The construction methods used in the frame are also the same as the Rowan types with the only difference being the use of a slipper rather than a trifid foot. This slipper foot is very similar to those made by the cabinetmaker Jesse Needham on a number of pieces of furniture, including a chest-on-frame (fig. 23) from Randolph County.

In comparing pieces attributed to Needham or his shop to the Rowan type III chest, numerous other similarities appear. Drawer construction on all the Rowan types is the same as that used by Needham in the chest-on-frame in figure 23. All the Rowan chests-on-frame use walnut as the primary wood, while the secondary wood in the Rowan III chest is yellow pine, also known to have been used by Needham, although less frequently than poplar. Cut nails are used by Needham and the maker of the Rowan III chest. The base molding on the Needham chest closely resembles moldings used on several Rowan types (see figures 1 and 7), and original brasses found on the Rowan type I example (fig. 7) are of the style used extensively by Needham. While these chests-on-frame may not have been built by Needham, the area where these examples were produced is also where Needham lived and worked for most of his career in North Carolina.

In the central region of the backcountry, two major groups formed the artisan base: the Quakers, who had a strong association with the Philadelphia area, and the New Light Baptists, whose roots reached throughout New England. Needham is known to have done a large portion of his business with the Quakers in Guilford and Randolph counties.[35] Most of the attributed Needham pieces reflect the desire to capture the Philadelphia style, the point

23. Chest-on-frame, attributed to Jesse Needham, northwest Randolph County, North Carolina, c. 1800–1810, walnut with poplar secondary. HOA 69¾", WOA 39", DOA 20⅜".

of origin for the majority of Quaker settlers in the central section of the Carolina backcountry.

Cabinetmaker Needham and other artisans of the area produced furniture in a style that they had been trained to execute and that customers found recognizable. Consequently, the furniture of the region for the period from 1800 through 1850 would demonstrate an influence from the area where these artisans were apprenticed.

Furniture historian John Bivins states in a 1974 article that "sophisticated stylistic details which the Northern artisans brought with them were rapidly assimilated into the folk culture of this relatively isolated region, much as they were in the Connecticut River valley."[36]

Indeed, there is a possibility that Needham may have brought this chest-on-frame form to the backcountry from coastal North Carolina. As previously stated, Needham was born in northeastern North Carolina. When he moved to the backcountry around 1793, he was already a trained cabinetmaker and therefore had served his apprenticeship while living on the coast. During the last half of the eighteenth century, venture cargo in the form of furniture was exported from New England to many southern ports. As Margaretta Lovell states, "The scale of this export enterprise can only be estimated, but it seems to have been considerable. Advertisements in such newspapers as the *South Carolina Gazette* record sizeable shipments from Newport, and shipping records in Annapolis and Charleston indicate that between 1764 and 1767 alone, 492 chairs, 71 case pieces, and 30 tables entered Annapolis from Rhode Island, and 133 Newport chairs, 70 case pieces, and 33 tables arrived in Charleston."[37] It also has been documented that "the greatest quantity of northern furniture with a North Carolina provenance has been found to be of New England origin, and in instances where coastal plain furniture shows a stylistic impact from outside regions other than Britain or Virginia, the design influence most frequently was from New England."[38] The Rowan group of chests-on-frame exhibits a direct transmission of these influences, whereas in the Randolph group, we see how artisans of the North Carolina backcountry interpreted the style they saw around them.

These chests-on-frame are a vernacular product. It has been aptly proposed that the terms *urban* and *rural*, or *city* and *country*, should not be applied to furniture. This assumption is well founded and explained in an essay by Philip Zea in *New England Furniture: The Colonial Era*. He states that *high style* and *urban* need not be considered the same. The more accurate terms *vernac-*

MUSEUM OF EARLY SOUTHERN DECORATIVE ARTS

ular and *sophisticated* "are defined by the originality, modernity, and visual success of design, the sources of the material used, and the training, construction techniques, and working patterns of the cabinetmakers."[39] The chest-on-frame was being produced in numerous regions of North America long after the middle of the eighteenth century, when it fell from fashion in the "sophisticated" urban centers of the Atlantic coast. Connecticut River Valley examples extend well into the nineteenth century; the best-known makers of this style are probably the Dunlop family of New Hampshire.[40] Production of this form in piedmont North Carolina continued until at least 1850.

Throughout the first half of the nineteenth century, many children and grandchildren of the people who first settled the backcountry of North Carolina moved south and west, to take part in an even greater migration than the one in which their forebears had participated. The vernacular furniture designs that evolved in the eastern states were taken inland with these nineteenth-century pioneers. Examples of chests with two bonnet drawers, although lacking the trifid-footed frame, have been documented as being made in the Georgia and South Carolina piedmont and in Tennessee starting around 1800.[41]

These chests are a product of immigrants with origins in the British Isles, but more important, they are a direct reflection of an evolving society. After the great tide of migration left the Carolina backcountry, society became more inflexible.[42] The Rowan type chests-on-frame tell the story of the taste of these immigrants, their origins, and the adaptive qualities exhibited by them on the American frontier. As the nation expanded and developed, society in the backcountry of North Carolina was to remain suspended in time, with practices and beliefs unchanged. The Randolph group of chests-on-frame illustrates what this area became, an isolated society where "all the world seemed foreign to the backsettlers except their neighbors and kin."[43]

As documentary research continues and more of both the Rowan and Randolph groups of chests-on-frame come to light, an exact attribution of these pieces may be possible. The identification of cabinetmakers that migrated to the backcountry of North

Carolina from the New England area and from England, Ireland, and Scotland during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries will be crucial, as will attribution of the invention of the bonnet drawer, whether it be the British Isles or colonial America. Most important will be the discovery of an example signed by a known cabinetmaker. Only then will the origin of the design for these chests-on-frame be known for certain.

Michael H. Lewis is the Registrar for the Arkansas Territorial Restoration in Little Rock, Arkansas.

NOTES

1. Johanna Miller Lewis, *Artisans in the Carolina Backcountry: Rowan County, N.C., 1753–1770*, (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1995), chapter 1; and John Bivins and Paula Welsheimer, *The Moravian Decorative Arts of North Carolina* (Winston-Salem, N.C.: Old Salem, Inc., 1981).

2. Carolyn Weekley, "James Gheen, piedmont North Carolina cabinetmaker," *The Magazine ANTIQUES*, May 1973, 940–44.

3. Frank L. Horton, "William Little, Cabinetmaker of North Carolina," *Journal of Early Southern Decorative Arts* 4, no. 2 (Nov. 1978), 1–3.

4. John Bivins, "A Piedmont North Carolina Cabinetmaker: The Development of a Regional Style," *The Magazine ANTIQUES*, May 1973, 968–73.

5. Frank L. Horton and Carolyn J. Weekley, *The Swisegood School of Cabinetmaking* (Winston-Salem, N.C.: Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts, 1973), introductory essay, n.p.

6. Helen Comstock, *American Furniture*, (New York: Viking, 1962), 79. Comstock cites articles by David Stockwell, "Irish Influence in Pennsylvania Queen Anne Furniture," *The Magazine ANTIQUES*, March 1961, and John T. Kirk, *American Furniture and the British Tradition to 1830* (New York: Knopf, 1982), 21. In *300 Years of American Seating Furniture*, Patricia Kane identifies several Philadelphia chairs with trifid feet (Boston: New York Graphics Society, 1976, figs. 66, 69, and 71).

7. David Jones, "Scotch Chests," *Regional Furniture* 2 (1988), 39. An English chest of drawers (acc. 1936-180) owned by the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation has upper drawer supports mortised through the back board in the same manner as the MESDA chest-on-frame. The upper chest, which was probably a chest of drawers with its base removed, was produced outside the London high-style sphere of influence. The upper chest appears to be in original condition.

8. Observations made by several collectors in piedmont North Carolina substantiate this oral tradition. "All of these type chests-on-frame seem to come from up and down the Uwharrie River, which flows through Randolph County from north to south. The majority of chests have been found between Farmer, North Carolina, and New Hope, North Carolina. The Kerns, Vance, Hopkins, and Hoover families have been the people that produced the majority of these chests, that is the chests have descended in these families, they were probably not the makers but the customers." "One chest in High Point is said to have descended in the Lewis Family and is stated as being made in 1823 by a man named 'Bur-

kett'; it is said to have been a wedding present for the family while living in Randolph County. This chest is a seven-drawer type and is the only one of this style known. There are somewhere between eight and a dozen five-drawer chests-on-frame known, two blanket chests, and one chest-on-frame with bookpress."

9. James P. Whittenberg, "Colonial North Carolina's 'Burnt-over District': The Pattern of Backcountry Settlement, 1740–1770," paper given at the Southern Historical Association Meeting, 1986, 3–4.

10. Lewis, *Artisans,* ch. 3.

11. Whittenburg, "Burnt-Over District," 3–4.

12. David Hackett Fischer, *Albion's Seed: Four British Folkways in America* (New York: Oxford, 1989), 635; also see Harry Roy Merrens, *Colonial North Carolina in the Eighteenth Century,* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1964), 61.

13. Whittenburg, "Burnt-Over District," 14.

14. Morgan Edwards, "Materials Towards a History of the Baptists in the Province of North Carolina," George W. Paschal, ed., *North Carolina Historical Review* 7 (1930), 3, 4.

15. Whittenburg, "Burnt-Over District," 14.

16. Charles Woodmason, *The Carolina Backcountry on the Eve of the Revolution,* Richard J. Hooker, ed. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1953), 42; also see Fischer, *Albion's Seed,* 189, 194.

17. Albert Cook Myers, *Immigration of the Irish Quakers into Pennsylvania, 1682–1750* (1902; reprint, Baltimore: The Genealogical Publishing Co., 1969), 178–79.

18. Woodmason, *Carolina Backcountry,* p. 42.

19. Bernard Bailyn, *Voyagers to the West,* (New York: Knopf, 1986), 16; also see Harry L. Watson, *An Independent People: The Way We Lived in North Carolina, 1770–1820,* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1983), 88–90.

20. Due to the use of cut nails, which were introduced into the backcountry of North Carolina at least as early as 1804, this chest-on-frame could not have been made prior to approximately 1800. See Bivins, "A Piedmont North Carolina Cabinetmaker," 973.

21. J. C. Loudon, *Furniture Designs from the "Encyclopaedia of Cottage, Farmhouse and Villa Architecture and Furniture,"* with a introduction by Christopher Gilbert (London: S.R. Publishers and *The Connoisseur*), cited in Jones, "Scotch Chests," 39.

22. Jones, "Scotch Chests," 39. The "Scotch chest" referred to by Jones has five upper drawers over three full-width lower drawers. The bonnet drawer is in the upper center, flanked by two small drawers on either side.

23. See note 7.

24. Elizabeth Bidwell Bates and Jonathan L. Fairbanks, *American Furniture: 1620 to the Present* (New York: Richard Marek, 1981), 98, 127, and Patricia Kane, *300 Years of American Seating Furniture,* figs. 66, 69, and 71.

25. David Stockwell, "Irish Influence."

26. A thorough survey of published examples of furniture, including chests-on-frame, high chests of drawers, dressing tables, and tea tables leads to the conclusion that Rhode Island produced the majority of these examples. Other examples could be assumed to be copies of Rhode Island work. Conversations with Ron Hurst, Curator of Furniture at Colonial Williamsburg and Philip Zea, Curator, Historic Deerfield, substantiate this observation.

27. Examination of numerous chests of drawers support the statement that New England cabinetmakers seldom used dustboards; the middle colonies of New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, and Maryland incorporated half to three-quarter dustboards; southern artisans had more of a tendency to use full dustboards.

28. Jones, "Scotch Chests," 39.

29. This chest-on-frame, as well as several others, were first illustrated in Dean A. Fales,

The Furniture of Historic Deerfield (New York: E.P. Dutton and Co., 1976), 186–88, and more recently in W. R. Ward and William N. Hosley, Jr., eds., *The Great River: Art and Society of the Connecticut Valley, 1635–1820* (Hartford, CT: Wadsworth Atheneum, 1985), 223–24.

30. Either as a later repair or to tighten a loose-fitting dovetail, small wedges can be inserted in the pin-side of a dovetail after a small slot has been sawn in its center. When the joint is assembled, the wedge is driven into the slot, expanding the pin and tightening the joint. The excess wedge is then planed away, making the repair almost invisible.

31. Horton and Weekley, *Swisegood School*, cat. entries 4, 5, and 6. All of these examples, as well as several others attributed to the Swisegood school, use comma inlay.

32. The chest-on-frame in central Virginia was photographed and recorded by Colonial Williamsburg's Assistant Curator of Furniture, Jonathan Prown. The Atlanta chest-on-frame was reported by antique dealer Billy F. Allen of Commerce, Georgia.

33. Brock Jobe and Myrna Kay, with the assistance of Philip Zea, *New England Furniture: The Colonial Era* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1984), 273–75 (entry 61).

34. A Connecticut River Valley chest-on-frame with three lunettes in its front skirt, owned by the Henry Ford Museum, is illustrated in Bates and Fairbanks, *American Furniture*, 303.

35. Bivins, "A Piedmont North Carolina Cabinetmaker," 969.

36. *Ibid.*, 968.

37. Margaretta M. Lovell, "Such Furniture as Will Be Most Profitable," *Winterthur Portfolio* 26, no. 1, 60.

38. John Bivins, *The Furniture of Coastal North Carolina, 1700–1820*, (Winston-Salem, N.C.: The Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts, 1988), 96.

39. Jobe and Kay, *New England Furniture*, 50.

40. Bates and Fairbanks, *American Furniture*, 304–5.

41. Henry D. Green, *Furniture of the Georgia Piedmont Before 1830* (Atlanta, Ga.: High Museum of Art, 1976), 93–94; also see Derita Coleman Williams and Nathan Harsh, *The Art and Mystery of Tennessee Furniture and Its Makers Through 1850* (Nashville: Tennessee Historical Society, 1988), 202.

42. Fischer, *Albion's Seed*, 650–51.

43. *Ibid.*, 650.

1. A Prospect of Charles Town from the Eastward, *Nicholas Pocock fecit 1767. Pen-and-ink sketch from a logbook of the* Lloyd, *Nicholas Pocock, master. Courtesy of the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, England.*

Timber Available in Charleston: 1660–1820

BRADFORD L. RAUSCHENBERG

It is somewhat surprising that more scholarship has not been devoted to understanding the types of woods available in North American cities in the period of development before 1820. The types of wood available to cabinetmakers, joiners, turners, carvers, builders, and shipwrights is an important aspect of material culture studies. Charleston, South Carolina, offers a wealth of documentation concerning shipping and trade in woods; investigation of this documentary evidence reveals a great range of woods, both native and imported, that were used for a wide variety of trades and levels of consumption.

Charleston's excellent harbor and port facilities provided a lucrative trade in foreign and domestic timber for merchants and lumber yards alike. From the 1670s to the 1690s, early trade connections with the English Carribean were established by families who immigrated from there to Charleston. From 1690 to the 1730s, with the rise of prominent rice planters and the mercantile families of Rawlins Lowndes and Eliza Lucas Pinckney, the pattern for success was firmly in place.[1]

These planter dynasties of Charleston set a pattern for the continued growth of an "aristocracy in residence." This trend was unlike other port cities of North America, but found close similarity with ports further south such as Havana, Salvador, Recife, and Rio de Janeiro; such similarities could yield evidence for an even tighter connection between Charleston and Caribbean cities than is presently acknowledged. This, connected with the fact that

Charleston "had a bigger maritime trade than New York before the American Revolution but was only half as big a town," posited Charleston as a major economic port.[2]

The ever-increasing slave, rice, sugar, coffee, tobacco, skins, dyestuffs, and timber trade between the Atlantic market and the larger West Indian colonies of Barbados, Leeward Islands, and Jamaica afforded convenient access to a variety of woods for the Charleston market. These timber sources were further broadened by changing politics and shipments from the Yucatan, Cuba, and Central and South America, as is reflected in citations within the documentary evidence.

The understanding of timber availability can enhance the study of furniture and architecture, trade and shipping, saw mills and the technology of wood handling, and land utilization and regional timber growth. It is encouraging to see, in the Winter 1994 *Regional Furniture Society Newsletter*, an overview of the paper, "The Timber Merchant in the Eighteenth Century," presented by John Cross at Exeter College, Oxford, England, during the society's Research in Progress Conference. If more such studies would be undertaken and the results made available in one data bank, the potential for new research in many fields of study could be enormous.

An opportunity to understand a person who was involved with timber in a major city such as Charleston is afforded through R. Campbell's 1747 publication, *The London Tradesman*, written "For the Information of Parents, and Instruction of Youth in their Choice of Business" on "All the Trades, Professions, Arts, both Liberal and Mechanic, now practiced in the Cities of London and Westminster." Though the "Timber-Merchant" offers a view of a very large city in England, it also describes the professional parameters of those who handled so much of the timber in Charleston.

> The Timber-Merchant properly, is the Importer of Timber from abroad [and] in his own bottoms; He is furnished with Deal from Norway, either in Logs or Planks; with Oak and Wainscoat from Sweden; and some from the Counties in England; with Mahogany from Jamaica; with Wallnut-Tree from Spain. These he sells to the Carpenter, Joiner, and Cabinet-Maker at considerable Profit. It requires no very inconsiderable Stock to

set up a Timber-Merchant; he must always have a large Stock by him in his Yards, and give considerable Credit to the Master-Builders.

A Merchant in this Way ought not only to be a Judge of Timber, but must know the Commodities that are to be sent from hence to those Countries from whence he has his Timber; though the Ballance of Trade with most of those Places is against us, and we are obliged to remit the Difference between the value of the Goods they send us and those we take from them in Bills of Exchange. The Swedes and Norweigians scarce take any thing from us but ready Money; we send them some small Quantities of Woolen Manufacture, Manchester Goods, Soap, Tobacco, and Sugar; we formerly used to serve them with East-India Goods; but as they have now Companies and Colonies of their own, their Demand from us is but small.

A Youth designed for this Trade does not require an over-and-above fertile Genius; Sagacity will serve instead of Wit; and his Knowledge may be confined to Figures and Merchants-Accounts: A good Hand in Writing is necessary to all who are to be admitted into the Merchant's Counting House: But as I am to treat of Merchants in a particular Chapter, I shall say no more here of this Species of them.

Every Man who keeps a Timber-Yard is not a Timber-Merchant, not the Person I have been describing; most of the Timber-Yards, especially at the Court End of the Town, are kept by the Carpenters or Master-Builders. These buy their Timber from the Importer, and retail it to the Trade; and in their Respect have no more Title to the Name of Timber-Merchant than the Vintner to that of the Wine-Merchant, except we were to follow the Custom of France, who style a Cobler a Merchant of Old Shoes.[3]

The distinction between the timber merchant and the lumber-yard proprietor in London was also present in Charleston; however, many who also took a "venture" in woods fall outside these classifications. Such individuals would include the occasional cabinetmakers with foreign and northern connections, the ship captain who would take a partial load or even a single log for profit as opportunity afforded, the general merchant who happened upon an opportunity, particularly in foreign shipments, to try to meet a tradesman's specific need, and even the opportunist who sells a chance find on the road or in the water.

To attempt more discussion regarding the economics and patterns of acquisition is beyond the purpose of this particular study. The data is assembled here under wood types, with evidence for

each type chronologically presented. Types of timber encountered in documents for which no evidence exists from lumberyards, saw mills, advertisements, or their arrival on ships were not discussed. These include chinaberry, chinquapin, cottonwood, dogwood, elder, elm, laurel, locust, magnolia, May-apple (haw), palmetto, persimmon, plane tree (sycamore), sassafras, and tupelo. Other woods found that are not included here are the dyewoods Brazilwood, camwood, fustic, and logwood, or the aromatic bark *Cortex eleuthera.* Two woods, basswood and beech, were included for which we have no evidence that they were traded in Charleston because the authors who cite them are so familiar with their use.

While an attempt was made to present unbiased documentation of the trades consuming timber, quite often citation relies heavily upon cabinetmakers, turners, and carpenters, who offered documentation that could not be ignored. Nevertheless, the added presence of shipping and mercantile evidence will offer a balanced, informative picture of Charleston timber usage from 1680 to 1820.

1. Jack Green, "Colonial South Carolina and the Caribbean Connection," *South Carolina Historical Magazine,* Vol. 88, No. 4 (October 1987) 192–210. 2. Jacob M. Price, "Summation: The American Panorama of Atlantic Port Cities," in Franklin W. Knight and Peggy K. Liss, eds., *Atlantic Port Cities* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1991), 266, 269. 3. R. Campbell, *The London Tradesman* (London: T. Gardner, 1747), 167–69.

Ash This coarse-grained hardwood (*Fraxinus pennsylvanica*), available as red ash or green ash (var. *lancoelata*), grows in the Low Country, where it is found adjacent to streams. It generally matures to a height of not over 60 feet with a trunk size of two feet in diameter. This genera contains eighteen native species which are found in North America. Another available species, the Carolina ash (*F. caroliniana*) grows primarily in swamps and is smaller, attaining a height of 40 feet and a trunk diameter of a foot. Two other ash species that grow in the North were available in Charleston: *F. americana* (white) and *F. nigra* (black).[1]

In 1666, a London pamphlet printed for Robert Hall extolled the benefits of "the Province of Carolina" and listed ash among the woods available in the vicinity of Charleston.[2] A 30 August 1671 let-

ter from Maurice Mathews, one of the Charleston leaders of the Barbadian party, to Lord Ashley in London described the available trees and named ash as one type.[3] In 1682 another London pamphlet designed to entice the prospective Carolina traveler listed ash as an available wood,[4] and yet another 1682 publication, Samuel Wilson's "An Account of the Province of Carolina," listed ash as a tree that was also found in England.[5]

Given the early identification of ash and the understanding of its properties, it is surprising that the first documented use of this wood in Charleston did not occur until 1762. The 20 January 1762 inventory of Robert Hardy, coachmaker and wheelwright, listed among the obviously shop-related items "a parcel of Ash Timber @ 2/pr. piece 50 pieces £5. [and] a parcl. of Ash Blank @ 50/pr. 100. 564 ft £14.2."[6] Among the appraisers of the above estate was Samuel Perkins, also a coachmaker, whose 12 June 1764 inventory contained "Ash wood" among items related to his occupation.[7]

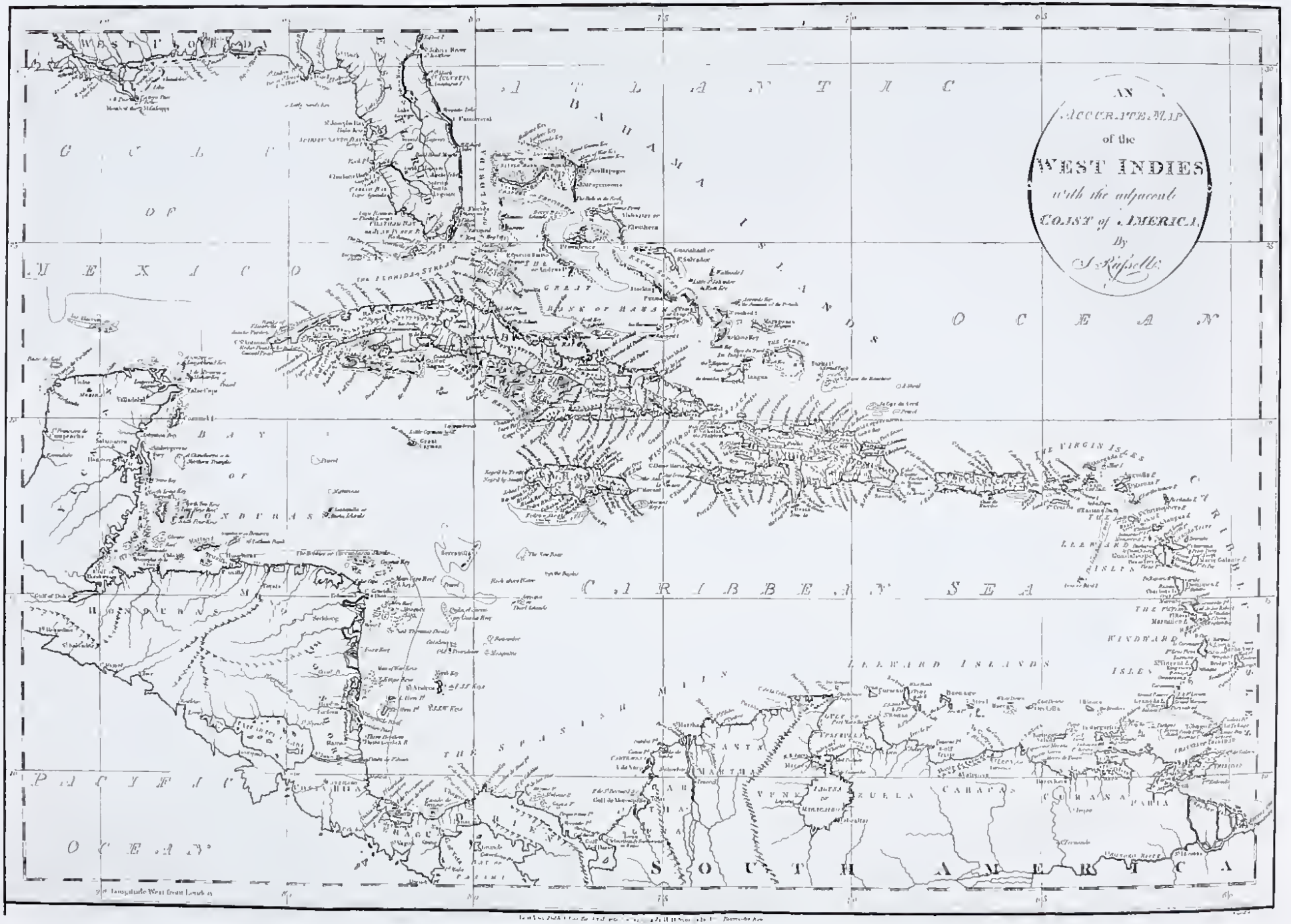
Thomas Elfe was the first Charleston cabinetmaker found to have purchased ash, according to a February 1769 stock account, where he "Paid Richard Hart [coachmaker], his accot. for Ash £11.19.0."[8] A further citation in the Elfe account book was on 30 December 1771, when £19.18.6 was paid "Dr. Stenson [Stinson] for Ash" from the shop account.[9] This purchase from Dr. Stinson is explained by a notice in the *South Carolina Gazette; and Country Journal* of 15 October 1771 in which Thomas Stinson, as an executor, announced an auction of the property of Michael Williams, riding-chair maker. Among the shop-related items listed were ash boards; undoubtedly these were sold to Elfe, who paid for them two months later. Williams's inventory of late 1771 listed "1 Lot of thin Ash at £4 pr hundred feet 182 £7.6 [and] 1 Lot thick Ash as £7 pr [hundred] 71 feet £4.18."[10] On 3 March of the following year, the Elfe account book records the purchase of "a Ash Plank" for £4.15 by the shop account (#63).[11] An appraisal of the Thomas Elfe estate on 11 September 1776 revealed "a parcel Ash plank £15," among other woods.[12]

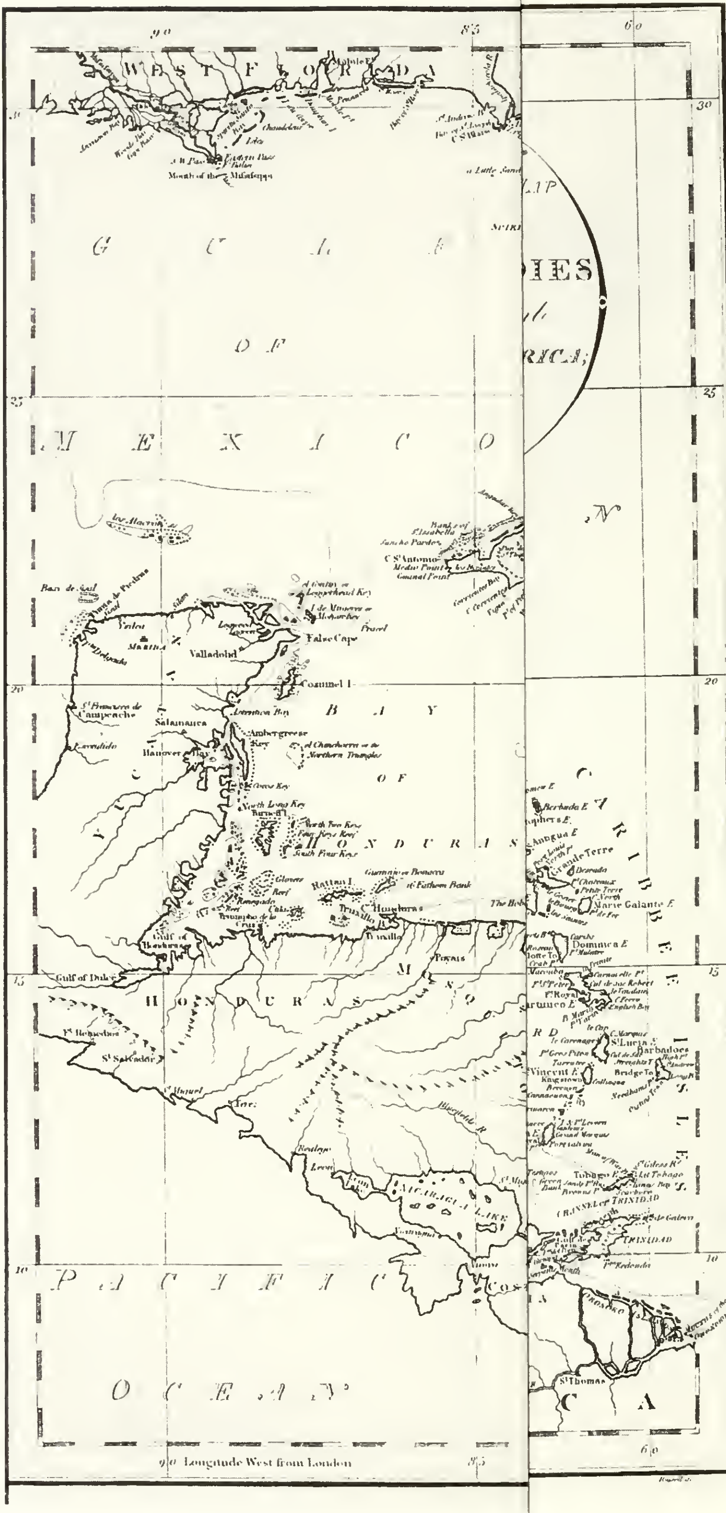
The need for ash by coachmakers apparently was acute; on 22 September 1772 an advertisement in the *South Carolina Gazette; and Country Journal* by Mathias Hutchinson, "Chaise-Maker,"

expressed his need for "Three or Four Thousand Feet of ASH PLANK.... Any Person inclinable to cut such Stuff" should contact him. The next evidence is found in the February 1793 inventory of William Jones, cabinetmaker, whose estate contained cabinetmaking wood which included "Sundry Ash ... Boards."[13] On 2 March 1798, John Gardner, chairmaker (whether riding or seating is unknown), advertised in the *City Gazette & Daily Advertiser* that he would be able to "furnish Chair Makers and Wheelwrights with OAK and ASH LUMBER." John Drayton, in his 1802 *A View of South Carolina*, said in describing the flora of the state that "Some species of ash. *(Fraxinus)* Grow in swampy lands; much used by carriage and block makers."[14] Further merchandising of ash was found in a 17 March 1804 advertisement of another coachmaker, Benjamin Casey, who offered a quantity of "well seasoned ASH LUMBER" along with other coachmaking items.[15]

In addition to *F. pennsylvanica*, ash of other species, probably *F. americana* (white) and *F. nigra* (black), was apparently imported. On 2 November 1804 "ASH PLANK," listed as arriving from Rhode Island, was offered for sale, and on the following 29 December, more "ASH PLANK" from Boston was advertised. On 6 March 1805 "ASHE TWO-INCH PLANK" was offered by Edmund Green, grocer, and on 13 March "A quantity of Ash OARS," which apparently had been imported, was advertised by T. Cambridge, merchant. Providence was specified as the origin of "500 feet Ash PLANK, suitable for Chair-making" that was sold on 9 December 1805 by Pearce and Tillinghast, merchants.[16]

The sale of the coachmaker Benjamin Casey's estate on 25 July 1806 and 11 August, the following month, contained "Ash Shafts and Planks" and "Ash plank and staves" respectively, among other shop-related items. More Boston-imported "3000 feet ASH PLANK" was advertised on 25 November 1806 by Z. Gilman, merchant. Another coachmaker's property, that of James Clark, was sold on 16 February 1807 and contained "Ash Plank and Shafts." On 2 February 1808 Z. Gilman again advertised "Landing ... from Boston ... 5000 feet Ash Plank" for sale. In November 1808 the merchants Glover & Motte advertised "ASH PLANK and RICE" for sale, though the origin of the former was not specified. Later in


AN
ACCURATE MAP
of the
WEST INDIES
with the adjacent
COAST of AMERICA
By
S. Russell
ATLANTIC
OCEAN
GULF
OF
MEXICO
BAHAMA ISLANDS
GREAT BANK OF HAVANA
BAY
OF
HONDURAS
CARIBBEAN SEA
THE VIRGIN ISLES
THE LEEWARD ISLES
THE WINDWARD ISLES
LEEWARD ISLANDS
THE SPANISH MAIN
SANTA MARTHA
VENEZUELA
CARACAS
CURANA
PARIA
SOUTH AMERICA
PACIFIC
OCEAN


WEST FLORIDA
Mouth of the Mississippi
G U L F
O F
M E X I C O
Valladolid
False Cape
Cozumel I.
Campeche
Salamanca
Hanover Bay
Ambergreese Key
B A Y
O F
H O N D U R A S
Rattan I.
Truxillo
C. Honduras
Gulf of Honduras
Gulf of Dulce
H O N D U R A S
St. Salvador
Poyais
NICARAGUA LAKE
P A C I F I C
O C E A N
Grande Terre
Marie Galante
Dominica
Barbadoes
St. Lucia
Kingstown
Tobago
TRINIDAD
St. Thomas
C A R I B B E E   I S L E S
90 Longitude West from London
85
60
30
25
20
15
10

November Benjamin Gray, lumberyard proprietor, advertised ash among the woods he had for sale. On 28 September 1809 the merchants Blair & Napier advertised that "5000 feet ASH PLANK, suitable for coach-makers" was for sale.[17]

In David Ramsay's 1809 *History of South-Carolina,* ash is described as being "used in making ploughs, waggons, and carts, spokes of wheels, tool handles, and dairy utensils; and the bark in making baskets."[18] A cargo, advertised for sale on 23 February 1810, had arrived from "Kennebeck River" [in Maine] and contained among other woods "Ash Hand Spikes." On 21 November 1814 the lumberyard proprietor John Harth advertised "ASH PLANK" for sale. "A few thousand feet Ash PLANK" was advertised by the merchants Harris & Bullock as arriving by ship on 1 September 1817. In January 1821 the coachmaker James O'Reilly's estate was advertised and was found to have included "Ash ... Plank."[19] In Robert Mills' 1826 *Statistics of South Carolina,* he described the ash of South Carolina as the "Frax Alba, American White Ash; grows 40 to 50 feet high, and 18 inches or more in diameter; the timber is much used by wheel-rights, chairmakers, &c. for making shafts, rimming of wheels, &c."[20]

1. Charles Sprague Sargent, *Manual of the Trees of North America* (1922; reprint, New York: Dover Publications, 1965), 838–39, 845–47; Elbert L. Little, Jr., *Atlas of United States Trees* (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1971), vol. I, map 130-E; Elbert L. Little, Jr., *Checklist of United States Trees,* Agriculture Handbook No. 541 (Washington, D.C.: United States Department of Agriculture, 1979), 134, 135. **2.** Robert Horne(?), "A Brief Description of the Province of Carolina," in Alexander S. Salley, Jr., ed., *Narratives of Early Carolina, 1650–1708* (1911; reprint, New York: Barnes & Noble, 1959), 68. **3.** Maurice Mathews to Lord Ashley, *Collections of the South Carolina Historical Society,* V (Richmond, Va.: William Ellis Jones, 1897), 354. **4.** Thomas Ashe, "Carolina; or a Description of the Present State of That Country," in Salley, 144. **5.** Samuel Wilson, "An Account of the Province of Carolina," in Salley, 170. **6.** Charleston County, S.C., *Wills, Etc.,* vol. 87A, 1761–1763 (transcript), 20 January 1762, p. 170. Hereafter cited as Charleston County Wills. **7.** *Ibid.,* 12 June 1764, p. 239. **8.** Thomas Elfe Account Book, Account #41, February 1769, Charleston [S.C.] Library Society. **9.** *Ibid.,* Account #63, 30 December 1771. **10.** Charleston County Wills, vol. 94A, 1771–1774, n.d. (previous document dated 18 September 1771), p. 210. **11.** Elfe Account Book, Account #63, 3 March 1772. **12.** Charleston County Wills, vol. 99A, 1776–1778, 11 September 1776, p. 116. **13.** Charleston County, S.C., *Inventories,* vol. B, 1787–1793, n.d. (c. 16 February 1793), p. 495. Henceforth cited as Charleston County Inventories. **14.** John Drayton, *A View of South Carolina* (Charleston: W. P. Young, 1802), 6–9, 84. **15.** *The Times,* Charleston, 17 March 1804. **16.** *Charleston Courier,* 2 November 1804, 27 and 29 December 1804, 6 March 1805, 13 March 1805, 9 December 1805. **17.** *City Gazette and Daily Advertiser,* Charleston, 23 July, 7 August 1806; *Charleston Courier,* 25 November 1806, 16 February 1807, 2 February, 12 and 30 November

1808, and 28 September 1809. **18.** David Ramsay, *The History of South-Carolina* (Charleston: David Longworth, 1809), II, 336. **19.** *Charleston Courier,* 23 February 1810, 21 November 1814; *Southern Patriot and Commercial Advertiser,* 1 September 1817; *The Times,* 20 January 1821. **20.** Robert Mills, *Statistics of South Carolina* (1826; reprint, Spartanburg, S.C.: The Reprint Company, 1972), 75.

Basswood Basswood (*Tilia spp.*), also called linden, lime tree, or Carolina basswood (*T. caroliniana*), attains a medium height and is a soft, straight-grained hardwood. It is one of three species native to North America.[1] In his 1731 *Natural History of Carolina, Florida, and The Bahama Islands,* Mark Catesby lists "Tilia. The Lime-tree" as occurring in Carolina.[2]

Documentary evidence does not reveal the use of basswood in Charleston; however, in his 1809 *History of South Carolina* David Ramsey describes medicinal uses for the linden: "The inner bark macerated in water is a good application to burns."[3] In 1826 Robert Mills cited a variety of uses for the linden: "The inner bark macerated in water, may be made into ropes and fishing nets, and is a good application to burns; the wood used for leather cutter's boards, and for carved work."[4] That Mills had knowledge of basswood used "for carved work" suggests that it was used for this purpose in Charleston.

1. Sargent, *Manual of the Trees of North America,* 740–41; William Chambers Coker and Henry Roland Totten, *Trees of the Southeastern States,* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press), 334–36; Little, 1979, 286, 287. **2.** Mark Catesby, *The Natural History of Carolina, Florida, and The Bahama Islands,* in H. Roy Merrens, ed., *The Colonial South Carolina Scene* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1977), 106. **3.** Ramsay, *History of South-Carolina,* II, 338. **4.** Mills, *Statistics of South Carolina,* 90.

Bay, Red Red bay (*Persea borbonia*), also called bay, occurs adjacent to streams and swamps or in sandy rich soil of the coast from southern Delaware southward to Texas. Attaining a height of 60 to 70 feet and a trunk diameter of 2 to 3 feet, this hardwood is heavy, strong, brittle, and close-grained, with a bright red heartwood and a light-colored sapwood.[1]

In early accounts, red bay is mentioned by Hilton in 1664 as "Bayes"; it is cited by Mathews in 1671 and by Wilson and Ashe in 1682 as "Bay."[2] When Mark Catesby discussed the red bay, he noted

that "these Trees are not common in Virginia, except in some places near the Sea. In Carolina they are every where seen, particularly in low swampy lands. In general they arrive to the size of some small Trees and Shrubs; though in some Islands, and particular places near the Sea, they grow to large and straight bodied Trees. The wood is fine grain'd, and of excellent use for cabinets, &c. I have seen some of the best of this wood selected, that has resembled water'd satin; and has exceeded in beauty any other kind of wood I ever saw.[3]

The first evidence of this wood being available as cut timber in Charleston was on 23 January 1733, with the arrival of "M [thousand] Feet Red Bay Plank from Georgia" aboard the schooner *Charming Sally*.[4] The first joiner recorded as having red bay was Thomas Blythe who, on 23 January 1733/34, mortgaged his household and shop property, the latter which included "36 mahogany boards and red bay boards" and unfinished desks.[5] William Hammet, chairmaker, had in his 12 December 1738 inventory "about 150 ft. Red Bay £7" and "160 feet Mahogany £25."[6] The January 1749/50 inventory of the cabinetmaker John Edwards (II) revealed "To Bay boards and Planks 40/," in addition to cypress and mahogany boards and planks.[7] The February 1759 inventory of William Burd, Edisto Island carpenter, contained "Parcel of Red Bay Boards £3" along with his tools and "Builders Dictionary."[8] The cabinetmaker Julian Maronsy's October 1767 inventory contained "6 Bays & 2 Cedar Boards" along with his other cabinetmaking materials.[9]

The shipping records for August 1785 reveal that East Florida was the origin of "47 Logs Cherry Timber, 61 Red Bay, 55 Cedar" that arrived on the schooner *Borell* for the merchant F. Robert.[10] In October the same year another shipment arrived from the same source and on the same carrier, containing "566½ feet Cherry & Red Bay" for the merchant Lewis & Co.[11] In September 1786 the merchants Blake and Vesey advertised the sale of "about 12000 feet of RED BAY and CEDAR" on Cochran's Wharf.[12] John Drayton (1802) wrote that the red bay's "grain is so fine, and bears so good a polish; that it is sometimes used for cabinet work and furniture; affording almost as good an appearance, as mahogany."[13] The availability of this wood continued to be advertised into the nine-

teenth century; in November 1806 Peter Catonnet, merchant, offered "25,000 feet Florida Red CEDAR [and] 500 ditto Red BAY."[14]

An interesting entry was found in the *Catalogue of The Colonial Exhibit, South Carolina Exposition, 1902.* The list of objects on display in the "Colonial Drawing Room" identifies "Chairs made of native red Bay Wood, used by the Colonists before Mahogany was imported." The lender was identified as one Miss Susan Smythe.[15] That in 1902 chairs were singled out as being made of red bay and were so identified among a list of furniture of other woods, including mahogany, must be given some credence as proof that furniture was constructed of this wood. To date no piece of Charleston furniture has surfaced having red bay as its primary wood.

1. Sargent, *Manual of the Trees of North America*, 357–58; Little, 1971, *Atlas of United States Trees*, Map 142-E; Little, 1979, *Checklist of United States Trees*, 183. **2.** William Hilton, "A Relation of a Discovery," in Salley, 44; Maurice Mathews to Lord Ashley in *Collections of the South Carolina Historical Society*, Volume V, 354; Wilson, "An Account of the Province of Carolina," in Salley, 170; Ashe, "Carolina, or a Description of the Present State of That Country," in Salley, 143. **3.** Catesby, *The Natural History of Carolina, Florida, and The Bahama Islands*, in Merrens, 63. **4.** *South Carolina Shipping Returns*, December 1721–December 1735, 23 January 1733. **5.** Charleston County, S.C., *Land Records, Miscellaneous* 1722–1736, Book L, pp. 291–300, 23 January 1733/34. Henceforth cited as Charleston Land Records. **6.** Charleston County Wills, vol. 68, 1736–1739, 12 December 1738, p. 260. **7.** Charleston County Wills, vol. 77B, 1748–1751, 19 January 1749/50, p. 389. **8.** Charleston County Wills, vols. 85A–85B, 1758–1761, 9 and 10 February 1759, pp. 269–275. **9.** Charleston County Inventories, 1763–1771, 14 October 1767, pp. 8–9. **10.** *Duties on Trade at Charleston*, 1784–1789, 13 August 1785, p. 226. **11.** *Ibid.*, 10 October 1785, p. 235. **12.** *Charleston Morning Post, and Daily Advertiser*, 2 September 1786. **13.** Drayton, *A View of South Carolina*, 68. **14.** *City Gazette*, 13 November 1806. **15.** South Carolina Society of Colonial Dames, *Catalogue of The Colonial Exhibit, South Carolina Exposition, 1902* (Charleston, S.C.: N.G. Duffy, 1902), 6.

Beech Beech (*Fagus grandifolia*), also called American beech, can reach a height of 120 feet and a trunk diameter of 3 to 4 feet. The wood is hard, strong, and close-grained, with white sapwood and dark, often reddish heartwood. It is found on rich soil on uplands and in lowlands on the margins of streams and swamps.[1]

A number of early writers, including Mathews (1671), Wilson (1682), Catesby (1731), and Bolzius (1751), mention that beech grew in the Low Country.[2] At the beginning of the nineteenth century Drayton described beech as growing "in mellow land, and the rich

high swamps; particularly of the middle and upper country. Beech trees are not there unfrequently seen with tall straight stems, three or four feet diameter."[1] David Ramsay in discussing tree growth along the coast, said that beech was "made into sundry articles of furniture; and is split into thin scales for band boxes. It also makes stocks for planes." Robert Mills corroborates what Ramsay reported.[4]

1. Sargent, *Manual of the Trees of North America*, 228–230; Little, *Atlas of United States Trees*, I, map 125-E; Little, *Checklist of United States Trees*, 131. 2. Mathews to Lord Ashley in *Collections of the South Carolina Historical Society*, 354; Wilson, "An Account of the Province of Carolina," in Salley, 170; Catesby, *The Natural History of Carolina, Florida, and The Bahama Islands*, in Merrens, 63; Johann Martin Bolzius, *Reliable Answer to Some Submitted Questions Concerning the Land Carolina; in Which Answer, However, Regard Is Also Paid at the Same Time to the Condition of The Colony of Georgia*, Klaus G. Loewald, Beverly Starika, and Paul S. Taylor, eds., *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3d Ser., XIV (April 1957), 237, hereafter cited as Bolzius, part I. 3. Drayton, *A View of South Carolina*, 77–78. 4. Ramsay, II, 336; Mills, 75.

Birch Birch (*Betula nigra*) or river birch, grows 80 to 90 feet high, with a trunk diameter of 15 to 20 inches; the wood is light, hard, strong, and close-grained, with a light brown heartwood and pale sapwood. It grows on the banks of streams, swamps, and ponds, in rich soil that is often inundated. There are seven North American species of birch.[1]

The presence of birch in the Low Country was noted in Horne's pamphlet.[2] In the 19 and 20 February 1783 inventory of David Rump, Sr., planter, there was listed "1 Lott of Red Bay & Burch Planks £5."[3] Drayton (1802) and Ramsay (1809) both list birch, with the former describing it as "used for baskets, and hoop-poles"; Mills (1826) repeats what Ramsay records, and adds that "the leaves dye a faint yellow; a resionous matter abounds in this tree which is highly flammable." On 16 May 1810 the *Charleston Courier* carried an advertisement for the contents of the sloop *Quick Lime*, "Birch BOARDS and JOIST, for Cabinet-makers," for sale by its "Captain on board" or J. Robbins, 11 Hasell Street. The advertisement went on to say that the vessel was ready to set sail for Boston and wanted freight. That the sloop was intended for Boston could indicate that the birch was loaded there on the trip

down or had been loaded in Maine, which the same newspaper had reported as the sloop's origin on 12 May 1810.[5]

Further evidence for the transcoastal shipment of birch was found on 20 November 1817 in an advertisement of Munro & May, cabinetmakers, who, in addition to offering their Queen Street cabinetmaking business, said that they had mahogany, "a few thousand feet best ½ inch NORTHERN PINE BOARDS, and a quantity of 3 by 4 inch BIRCH JOIST" for sale.[6]

1. Sargent, *Manual of the Trees of North America*, 205, 208–10; Little, *Atlas of United States Trees*, I, map 110-E; Little, *Checklist of United States Trees*, 59–61. 2. Horne, "A Brief Description of the Province of Carolina," in Salley, 68. 3. Charleston County Inventories, vol. A, 1783–1787, 14ff. 4. Drayton, *A View of South Carolina*, 6–9; Ramsay, *History of South Carolina*, II, 336; Mills, *Statistics of South Carolina*, 69. 5. *Charleston Courier*, 12 and 16 May 1810. 6. *The Times*, 20 November 1817.

Boxwood Boxwood (*Buxus sempervirens*) is not indigenous to North America. Its growth range is southern Europe, western Asia, and North Africa. The wood is light yellow, hard, and heavy, with a very fine texture; it thus finds favor with turners, carvers, instrument makers, and inlay makers.[1] The names given some woods in contemporary documents are not always consistent with modern terms; boxwood is such a case. There is a tree called yellow wood or boxwood (*Schaefferia frutescens*) that is indigenous to Florida, the Bahama Islands, through the West Indies, and into Venezuela. It reaches a height of 35 to 40 feet, with a trunk diameter of 8 to 10 inches. The properties of *Schaefferia* are very similar to those of *Buxus*; therefore, as Sargent writes, it is "sometimes used as a substitute for boxwood in wood engraving."[2]

The documentary evidence for boxwood in Charleston is first found in a 19 August 1766 advertisement in the *South Carolina Gazette; and Country Journal* listing "Four Tons of Box Wood" with ten tons of *lignum vitae* and 500 feet of mahogany plank offered by John Howell, a general merchant. This advertisement unfortunately did not offer evidence of the origin of the woods; however, since the other woods are tropical, one would assume that the boxwood was of the same origin. Later the same year, on 31 October, boxwood was being offered for sale by the merchants

Woodrop and Cathcart, who had "a quantity of MAHOGANY PLANK and BED-POSTS, BRAZILETTO, LIGNUM VITAE and BOX-WOOD."[3] Again, there was no evidence for the woods' origin; however, other merchants' advertisements offered "Mahogany Bed Posts" together with mahogany and *lignum vitae*, all of which was being sold off of a schooner from New-Providence (an island in the Bahamas, now Nassau).[4] Evidence for the London importation of live boxwood for sale in Charleston was seen on 14 March 1768 with an advertisement of Martha Logan, who apparently was selling seeds and plants, including "box for edging beds," from her garden.

Thomas Sheraton's 1803 *Cabinet Dictionary* defined the "Box Tree" in the following way: "The English wood [*Buxus sempervirens*?] is esteemed inferior to that which comes from the Levant [eastern Mediterranean area]; but the American box [*Schaefferia*?] is preferable to it."[5] Further evidence for boxwood was found when the ship *Enterprise* arrived from Nassau on 4 May 1804 with its cargo of "Dye Wood, Mahogany, etc." for F. Weir & Co., which firm advertised on 10 May 1804 the ship's arrival and that "4,500 feet Cuba Mahogany . . . 5 Tons Ebony and Box Wood" was among the cargo for sale.[6]

1. David A. Kribs, *Commercial Foreign Woods on the American Market* (New York: Dover Publications, 1968), 24; F. Lewis Hinckley, *Directory of the Historic Cabinet Woods* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1960), 45–46. 2. Sargent, *Manual of the Trees of North America*, 680. 3. *South Carolina Gazette and American General Gazette*, 31 October 1766. 4. *Charleston Morning Post, and Daily Advertiser*, 1 September 1786. 5. Thomas Sheraton, *Cabinet Dictionary* (1803; reprint, New York: Praeger, 1970), I, 90–91. 6. *Charleston Courier*, 4 and 10 May 1804.

Cedar Cedar (*Juniperus silicicola*), also called southern red cedar and, in early accounts, "juniper," grows in moist and swampy soils on the immediate coast of the coastal plain from northeastern North Carolina southward through Florida to Texas. Red cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*) enjoys a widespread distribution throughout the eastern half of the United States, except where *J. silicicola* is found. The Low Country occurrence of *J. virginiana* begins about fifty miles inland. This aromatic softwood exhibits a heartwood of a deep reddish-tan color, changing to a light yel-

lowish-tan sapwood. The wood is soft, with fine texture and straight grain, and is fairly brittle. It is very rot-resistant in the soil. Both species grow to 100 feet and have a trunk diameter of 3 to 4 feet.[1]

Several other species of *Juniperus* might have been used as cut wood in the Charleston area. One is *J. lucayana* or *J. barbadensis*, a red cedar, found in the more tropical environment of south Georgia, Florida, and westward along the Gulf of Mexico into Texas. It occurs in the Bahamas, San Domingo, eastern Cuba, and the mountains of Jamaica and Antigua.[2] Another is *J. bermudiana* of the Bermuda Islands.[3] The 1774 publication, *The History of Jamaica*, contains a listing of woods used for "Cabinet Ware" that includes "Barbadoes Cedar, Bermudas ditto."[4]

Another cedar documented in Charleston was the Spanish cedar (*Cedrela odorata*), also called Havana cedar or "cigar box" cedar. This is not a true cedar in the botanical classification, but a member of the mahogany family (*Meliaceae*); it is commonly termed a cedar because of its aromatic wood. Native to tropical America, the Spanish cedar occurs in the West Indies, Central America, Mexico, and South America. The properties of the wood are similar to that of *Juniperus*.[5]

Another cedar revealed through documents is the Atlantic or southern white cedar (*Chamaecyparis thyoides*). Native to freshwater swamps and bogs, this tree has a light brown heartwood and white to brown sapwood. This aromatic softwood is straight-grained and fine-textured. Growth distribution maps indicate a range outside of the Low Country; there is a possibility that its timber was imported to Charleston. The range of this softwood is the coast of Maine southward to the southern coast of North Carolina, with sporadic occurrence in Piedmont South Carolina, Georgia, and especially western Florida.[6] Sargent, Harrar, and Little indicate that the range continues from North Carolina to "on" or "near" the coast into Florida.[7]

The use of cedar is often documented as just that: "cedar." A distinction was seldom made; therefore, one should assume that the writer was referring to red cedar. Occasionally "juniper" is found, which undoubtedly indicates red cedar.

Robert Horne's 1666 description of "The Province of Carolina" lists "white and red Cedars," therefore, one assumes that he is describing the cedars of both Carolinas.[8] In 1671 Maurice Mathews mentions "cedar" generically with cypress as "wonderfull large and tall of delicate grain and small, better for masts than any wood in the world."[9] A decade later Thomas Ashe was more forthcoming in his knowledge of cedar: "It's [the soil near the sea] cloathed with odoriferous and fragrent woods, flourishing in perpetual and constant Verdures, viz. the lofty Pine, the sweet smelling Cedar and Cypress Trees, of both which are composed goodly Boxes, Chests, Tables, Scriptores, and Cabinets. The Dust and Shavings of Cedar laid amongst Linnen or Wollen, destroys the Moth and all Verminous Insects: It never rots, breeding no worm, by which many other Woods are consumed and destroyed. Of Cedar there are many sorts; this in Carolina is esteemed of equal Goodness for Grain, Smell and Colour with the Bermudian Cedar, which of all the West Indian is esteemed the most excellent; that in the Caribbe Islands and Jamica being of a courser kind, Oyl and the Spirit of Wine penetrating it; but with this they make Heading for their Cask, which the sharpest and most searching Liquors does not pierce."[10] Samuel Wilson also listed the "Cedar white and red"; he was either copying Horne's account or describing both Carolinas.[11]

The 11 May 1694 inventory of the joiner James Beamer contained "200 foote of Cedar board £18-04 [and] a parcel of Cedar £5."[12] In the 23 May 1694 estate inventory of John Vansusteren, merchant, there were "900 foot of Ceader bords £2-14- [and] 80 foote of Ceader Plank £0-10- "[13] When David Ramsay published his 1809 *History of South Carolina,* he mentioned cedar in a way that indicates one way in which it was used as well as its properties: "On the plantation of Thomas Drayton, in St. Andrews, a inscription on wood of this species in 1706, indicates the grave of Stephen Fox. There is no tombstone in Charleston equally old on which time has made so little impression."[14]

In June 1716 Richard Beresford, who served as an Assembly representative for Berkeley and Craven counties, wrote the Lords Commissioners of Trade and Plantations a "Memorial ... Representing the Present State of South Carolina" in which he com-

MUSEUM OF EARLY SOUTHERN DECORATIVE ARTS

ments on the cedar. "There was also great quantitys of Cedar & Cypress far exceeding any Norway Deals being free from Knots of curious white colour, great lengths proper for floring [*sic*] of the most magnificant Buildings. The Cedar for some uses far exceed any other sort of wood and at the request of some Noblemen and Gentlemen of this Nation hath been brought into this Kingdome but the Importers being obliged to pay duty for it as Sweetwood amounts to a Prohibition the further Importation thereof has been quite discouraged."[15] On 24 June 1734 the schooner *Providence Elinor* of Brunswick, from North Carolina, entered Charleston with "234 foot Walnut Boards [and] 370 foot Cedar [boards?]"[16] This record reflects what its cargo was, not necessarily what was unloaded.

On 17 July 1736 Richard Marten, painter and glazier, advertised that he could paint "imitation of Marble, Walnut, Oak, Cedar, &c. at five shillings a yard."[17] The carpenter Samuel Nicholas's 17 November 1736 inventory contained "300 feet of old Cedar boards @ 30/£4–10–."[18] The *Pennsylvania Gazette* for 14 March 1737/38 carried the import/export quote for Charleston in which "3600 feet Cedar Boards" were exported from 1 November 1736 to 1 November 1737.

Bolzius wrote in 1751 that "in our region [Ebenezer] cedars are to be found only now and then, but they abound along the sea. They have a reddish, fragrent wood. When it is treated, the color pales a little. . . ."[19] In the 13 February 1755 estate of the cabinetmaker James Rousham, there were "7 Cedar boards" and "9 Mahognay boards" among the objects related to his trade.[20] Another cabinetmaker, Thomas Stocks, had "The half of 300 feet of Caeder @ £7 Hun[dre]d" among other woods in his 14 April 1760 inventory.[21]

Further evidence for cedar was found in a Court of Common Pleas case of 10 December 1764 in which the cabinetmaker Farquar McGillivray had earlier filed charges against Axson & Clive, carpenters, for failure to pay for wood sold as well as services rendered between 6 May 1761 and 16 June 1762. The sale of wood included a total of 61 cedar boards.[22] Cedar for sale is found in a 21 October 1766 advertisement of Johnston & Simpson, merchants: "A few Thousand Feet of Cedar Boards, to be sold cheap."[23] The 14

October 1767 inventory of Julian Maronzy, cabinetmaker, revealed mahogany, bay, and "2 Cedar Boards" among his cabinetmaking effects.[24] The use of red cedar in shipbuilding was demonstrated in an advertisement of 11 October 1768 with the sale of the "Schooner Patty ... built at Beaufort, Port Royal, in the year 1762.... her timbers all of LIVE OAK and RED CEDAR, and planked with YELLOW PINE."[25] The 9 October 1772 mortgage of the cabinetmaker Thomas Snead by Jacob Valk, gentleman, lists a bond of £670 Snead received for his cabinetmaking stock, which included "63 White Cedar Boards, 47 Red Cedar Boards" and other lots of woods; this indicates that the two cedars were in use and distinguished by cabinetmakers, at least in this case.[26]

Thomas Elfe's account book records the purchase on 15 March 1775 of Cedar from Daniel Robbin[s] for £27. The following September, Elfe's will listed six cabinetmaking woods in minor quantities, including "A Parcel Cedar in [Boards] £9."[27] To a December 1783 advertisement describing his skills, Jacob Sass added a request for "a quantity of Red Cedar Boards, for which a generous price will be given."[28] On 13 August 1785 the schooner *Borell* arrived in Charleston from east Florida with a cargo of logs, among which were "55 Cedar [logs]" undoubtedly cut in the area of the port of departure.[29]

On 26 January 1787 MaCaulay & Davis, merchants, advertised red cedar for sale at Champneys's Wharf in the *Charleston Morning Post and Daily Advertiser.* The origin of some cut cedar was indicated in a 25 March 1789 advertisement by Lewis Newhouse for "a small cargo of Cedar Logs, Just Received from East-Florida," and two days later through an advertisement of Thomas Cooke, who offered "A Parcel of Georgia CEDAR, abouth 3000 feet is of an extra quality; it is on Beal's Wharf."[30]

According to a c. 1791 *Chancery Court Bills of Complaint* record, in a suit that involved the executors of the estates of Thomas and Bernard Richardson and John Wyatt, all carpenters, apparently a ledger revealed an unpaid £5.11.8 for 152½ feet of "Spanish Cedar Sold Stedman," of which ⅓ of the value was owed to Thomas Richardson.[31] A 14 August 1799 judgment case involved the estate of James Burns, cabinetmaker, and Violetta Wyatt, in which the

estate sought payment for services performed and goods sold, among which was "20 June [1790] 7 Feet of Cedar 5/6.... 6 December [1790] [sawing] 131 [feet] of Cedar 9/4 [carting] £ 12–10–.... 15 December [1790] 158 [feet] [Cedar] 10/– [carting] £16–6–."[32] On 4 May 1801 Thomas Ham, merchant, advertised "About one Thousand feet choice RED CEDAR, in large logs, some of which square two feet, just received from St. Mary's [East Florida] in the Schooner Elizabeth and Ann."[33]

The 10 February 1802 inventory of the cabinetmaker Nicholas Silberg revealed "1 Lott Cedar Boards $8" in the materials section, along with prepared coffin "stuff" of cedar. This was followed by a sale on 18 March of Silberg's effects of which cedar was again indicated as one of the woods.[34]

The 1802 *View of South Carolina* by John Drayton included his description of Red Cedar as *J. virginiana*, which "Grows on the sea islands, and on lands not far removed from salts ... this tree is a beautiful evergreen, whose branches spread horizontally, until the lowermost will at length nearly touch the ground; and whose whole appearance is a regular cone. The wood of this tree is used in many cases of cabinet work, in timbering boats and vessels; and as timber, or posts to be fixed in the earth; it is the most lasting wood which grows in this state."[35]

On 15 March 1803 more cedar was advertised for sale as "Landing, at Gaillard's Wharf, and for sale, 600 feet Red Cedar Timber, 500 feet red cedar Posts." Later the same month, more red cedar was advertised for sale by Joseph Rixby, merchant, who offered "1500 feet square Cedar Timber, 750 Cedar Posts."[36]

Sheraton's 1803 *Cabinet Dictionary* enumerated the types of cedar available and listed those that were found in "Virginia and Carolina"; he described cedar in the following way: "The cedar which is used by cabinet makers, is imported [into England], in general, from the West India islands, and is of an agreeable smell; but seldom comes to us in trees larger than a foot in diameter. There is a common kind of cedar, in color much like dark mahogany. This we suppose to be [from] Spain.... The smell of this wood is rather offensive; but it does very well for the bottoms and backs of common drawer work, particularly for bottoms, as it

comes cheap, and often broad enough to do without jointing. Some call this Havannah cedar, from a West India island of that name, where, probably, some of it may grow."[37]

In February 1804 cedar that originated in St. Augustine was advertised for sale, and the following month another advertisement offered a load of cedar from St. Mary's, Florida.[38] In December 1805 the inventory of John Douglas, cabinetmaker, included "A lot of Cedar $60" along with pine and mahogany.[39] The estate effects of Thomas Oliphant, upholsterer, which were sold on 10 July 1806, contained "a few cedar boards."[40] In October and November 1806 respectively, advertisements offered "Eighty Logs of Red Cedar ... from East Florida" and "25, 000 feet Florida Red Cedar ... 130 Cedar Posts."[41]

The cabinetmaker Michael Muckenfuss wrote in his 8 July 1808 will that all of his shop-related effects, including cedar among other woods, were to be sold upon his death. Upon his death, his 6 September 1808 inventory revealed "1 Lott Cedar Boards $6.25," as well as cedar coffin boards.[42]

In an advertisement from 13 May 1809, "about eight hundred very prime Red Cedar logs" were offered for sale. On 24 May 1811 R. Heriot, merchant, advertised "176 Logs of Cedar" for sale, which had arrived from Savannah, at Blake's Wharf. Five days later Samuel Dickinson advertised at the same location that "3,000 feet Spanish Cedar, in lots to suit purchaser" was for sale. The following February found the schooner *May* arriving from Amelia Island, Georgia, with a load of cedar logs and posts. And the following month, the schooner *Owendaw* also entered Charleston from the same port with "3000 feet prime Red Cedar, and a few posts." The 6 January 1815 sale of effects of the cabinetmaker Samuel Desel revealed cedar boards.[43]

Another source of the cedar shipped to Charleston is recorded on 18 April 1817 with the arrival of the brig *Pilgrim*, from Cedar Key, Florida, which contained "3 to 4,000 feet of red CEDAR, superior to any ever offered for sale in this market." Another advertisement may illustrate the high quality attributed to Florida cedar: "Forty pieces choice FLORIDA CEDAR."[44]

Lastly, the 24 February 1836 inventory of Jacob Sass, cabinet-

maker, revealed "Lot of Red Cedar Boards $8 . . . 73 Spanish Cedar $30 . . . 1 Lot Cedar Slabs $3." The distinction he makes between the types of cedar may illustrate a perceived difference in quality.[45]

1. Little, *Atlas of United States Trees*, maps 29-E, 31-E; Little, *Checklist of United States Trees*, 157; Sargent, *Manual of the Trees of North America*, 88–89; Hinckley, *Directory of the Historic Cabinet Woods*, 86–87; E. S. Harrar, *Hough's Encyclopedia of American Woods* (New York: Robert Speller & Sons, 1957), 184–92. 2. Sargent, *Manual of the Trees of North America*, 89–90. 3. Bryden Bordley Hyde, *Bermuda's Antique Furniture and Silver* (Hamilton: The Bermuda National Trust, 1971), 1; Hinckley, *Directory of the Historic Cabinet Woods*, 117–18. 4. Edward Long, *The History of Jamaica* (1774; reprint, London: Frank Cass & Co., 1970), 863. 5. Kribs, *Commercial Foreign Woods on the American Market*, 107–8; Hinckley, *Directory of the Historic Cabinet Woods*, 116–17. 6. Little, *Atlas of United States Trees*, map 11-E. 7. Sargent, *Manual of the Trees of North America*, 75–76; Harrar, *Hough's Encyclopedia of American Woods*, 170–71; Little, *Checklist of United States Trees*, 87–88. 8. Horne, "A Brief Description of the Province of Carolina," in Salley, 68. 9. Mathews to Lord Ashley in *Collections of the South Carolina Historical Society*, 354. 10. Thomas Ashe, "Carolina, or a Description of the Present State of that Country," in Salley, 141–42. 11. Wilson, "An Account of the Province of Carolina," in Salley, 170. 12. Charleston County Wills, vols. 52–53, 1687–1710, 11 May 1694, pp. 206–9. 13. *Ibid.*, vols. 52–53, 1687–1710, 23 May 1694, pp. 199–205. 14. David Ramsay, *The History of South Carolina*, II, 337. 15. *Colonial Records of North Carolina*, (Raleigh: P. M. Hale, 1886), vol. II, 233. 16. *South Carolina Shipping Returns*, December 1721–December 1735, 24 June 1734. 17. *South Carolina Gazette*, 17 July 1736. 18. Charleston County Wills, vol. 68, 1736–1739, 17 November 1736, pp. 106–9. 19. Bolzius, part I, 237. 20. Charleston County Wills, vol. 82B, 1753–1756, 13 February 1755, p. 531. 21. Charleston County Wills, vol. 85B, 1758–1761, 14 April 1760, p. 524. 22. South Carolina Court of Common Pleas, *Judgement Rolls*, Box 59A, #18A, Farquar McGillivray vs. Axson & Clive, 10 December 1764. 23. *South Carolina Gazette; and Country Journal*, 21 October 1766. 24. Charleston County Inventories, 1764–1771, 14 October 1767, pp. 8–9. 25. *South Carolina Gazette; and Country Journal*, 11 October 1768. 26. Charleston County, S.C., *South Carolina Mortgages*, No. DDD, 1771–1777, 9 October 1772, p. 222. 27. Elfe Account Book, #183, 15 March 1775; Charleston County Wills, vol. 99A, 1776–1778, 11 September 1775, p. 116. 28. *South Carolina Gazette and General Advertiser*, 16 December–18 December 1783. 29. South Carolina Treasury Records, *Duties on Trade at Charleston*, 1784-1789, 13 August 1785, p. 226. 30. *City Gazette, or the Daily Advertiser*, 25 and 27 March 1789. 31. Charleston County, S.C., *Chancery Court Bills of Complaint*, Part 1, #10, c. 1791. 32. *South Carolina Judgement Rolls*, Court of Common Pleas, 1799, #1075A, 14 August 1799, James Burns vs. Violetta Wyatt. 33. *City Gazette and Daily Advertiser*, 4 May 1801. 34. Charleston County Inventories, vol. D, 1800–1810, 10 February 1802, p. 97; *The Times*, 24 February 1802. 35. Drayton, *A View of South Carolina*, 82–83. 36. *Charleston Courier*, 15 and 30 March 1803. 37. Sheraton, *Cabinet Dictionary*, 140–41. 38. *Charleston Courier*, 27 February, 15 March 1804. 39. Charleston County Inventories, Book D, 1800–1810, 31 December 1805, pp. 373–74. 40. *City Gazette and Daily Advertiser*, 4 July 1806. 41. *Charleston Courier*, 15 October 1806; *City Gazette*, 13 November 1806. 42. Charleston County Wills, vol. 31, 1807–1818, 8 July 1808, p. 144; Charleston County Inventories, vol. D, 1800–1810, 6 September 1808, pp. 476–77. 43. *Charleston Courier*, 13 May 1809, 24 and 29 May 1811; *The Times*, 3 February, 14 March 1812; *City Gazette and Commercial Daily Advertiser*, 3 January 1815. 44. *Courier*, 16 and 18 April, 6 December 1817. 45. Charleston County Inventories, Book H, 1834–1844, 24 February 1836, p. 153.

Cherry The wild black cherry (*Prunus serotina*) grows extensively in the eastern half of the United States and attains a height of 100 feet. With a trunk diameter of three to four feet, this hardwood is lightweight yet hard, with a fine texture and close grain; its heartwood is light-red to brown, and it has a thin yellow sapwood.[1]

There is no evidence that cherry was recognized by early observers, aside from Catesby's 1731 listing of "Clustered Black Cherry Carolina."[2] The first documentary evidence found for cherry is from 13 August 1785, when the schooner *Borell* arrived in the port of Charleston from East Florida with a cargo of cedar, red bay, and "47 Logs Cherry Timber" for the merchant F. Robert.[3] Later that year, in October, another load of "566½ feet Cherry & Red Bay" arrived in Charleston from East Florida.[4] In January the following year the "lumber yard on Russel's Wharf" was advertised as having "Cherry Tree" available.[5] The arrival of a large shipment of cherry was advertised on 8 July 1802 by Thomas Elfe, Jr., carpenter and lumberyard proprieter, as "Just Landed.... Ten Thousand Feet of Prime Cherry Boards and Plank."[6] In July and August 1806 the shop belonging to the coachmaker Benjamin Casey, together with its contents, was sold; the contents were advertised as including coach parts of ash, oak, and hickory, and boards of poplar and cherry.[7] This evidence for cherry being stocked by one carriagemaker probably reflects use by others of the same trade. Although there is no tangible evidence for cherry being used in Charleston furniture, David Ramsay apparently was conscious of its use, since he mentions that "furniture is made of its wood."[8]

1. Sargent, *Manual of the Trees of North America*, 575–76; Little, *Atlas of United States Trees*, map 155-E; Little, *Checklist of United States Trees*, 215. **2.** Catesby, *The Natural History of Carolina, Florida, and The Bahama Islands*, in Merrens. **3.** South Carolina Treasury Records, *Duties on Trade at Charleston*, 1784–1789, 13 August 1785, p. 226. **4.** *Ibid.*, 10 October 1785, p. 235. **5.** *The Charleston Evening Gazette*, 17 January 1786. **6.** *City Gazette and Daily Advertiser*, 8 July 1802. **7.** *Ibid.*, 23 July, 7 August 1806. **8.** Ramsay, *History of South-Carolina*, vol. II, 336.

Chestnut Chestnut (*Castanea dentata*), also called American chestnut, attains a height of 100 feet and a trunk diameter of 3 to 4 feet. Its wood is not strong but fairly soft, and reddish brown in color; it does not dry well. This hardwood is not native to the Low Country, preferring a colder climate.[1]

In 1666 Robert Horne listed the chestnut as a tree in "The Province of Carolina," but it is obvious that he was also describing the inner regions of the province.[2] Documentary evidence for chestnut in Charleston was not found until 7 April 1801 with the arrival of the *Friendship*, which contained a cargo of oak in plank and boards and "a few thousand Half-Inch CHESTNUT BOARDS"; though the origin of the cargo was not given, the other cargo suggests a New England port.[3] Five years later, on 17 October 1806, the schooner *Nancy* arrived from Providence, Rhode Island, with "4000 Chestnut Boards, for Cabinetmakers," which was advertised three days later by Pierce & Tillinghast, merchants.[4]

David Ramsay wrote that chestnut makes "good tubs or vats for liquor, and never shrinks after once seasoned. It makes fence-rails." He further described how it thrives in the mountains.[5] Another shipment from Providence arrived on the brig *James Monroe*, which landed with a cargo of ash and "30,000 feet Chestnut Boards" on 1 September 1817.[6]

1. Sargent, *Manual of the Trees of North America*, 231–32; Little, *Atlas of United States Trees*, maps 27-NE, 27-SE; Little, *Checklist of United States Trees*, 77. 2. Horne, "A Brief Description of the Province of Carolina," in Salley, 68. 3. *The Times*, 7 April 1801. 4. *City Gazette and Daily Advertiser*, 17 and 20 October 1806. 5. Ramsay, *History of South-Carolina*, vol. II, 37, 290. 6. *Southern Patriot and Commercial Advertiser*, 1 September 1817.

Cypress Cypress (*Taxodium distichum*), also called bald cypress, black cypress, or red cypress, is a softwood native to the coastal plain from southern Delaware south through Texas. Cypress often grows in swamps to a height of 150 feet, with a trunk diameter of 4 to 5 feet or more. The wood is light, soft, light or dark brown in color, not strong, easily worked, and slightly aromatic.[1]

Maurice Mathews mentions cypress in two letters to Lord Ashley on 30 August 1671, once in a list of trees, and the second time in his area description of "The River Ashley." He wrote, "Cypress here is (or all of us are mistaken yet have seen of it) this Cypress is Wonderful Large and tall, and smooth, of a delicate graine & smells. Some yet did belonge to Captn. Jenrs. shipp sent hither by Mr Thomas Colleton, did say itt was not ye true Cypress; but something elce, & yet they in New England did sell it very deare for masts being much better for yet use then Any wood in ye World butt whatsoever itt bee. I have some reason within me not to believe them."[2] In 1682 Wilson also listed cypress as growing in South Carolina.[3]

The occurrence of cypress citations in the records is overwhelming; only a few examples will be offered to illustrate how it was used and valued. In 1713/14 the joiner Jean DeBreuil was involved in a judgment case in which he was awarded the money owed him for "Two Thousand foot of Cypress Board" sold Francis LeBrasseur, merchant, in 1712.[4] On 18 May 1734 the Upper House decided that "This House having been informed that it is impracticable to get Live Oak Plank of two feet broad and six inches thick for maintaining the Ordinance have therefore thought fit to have the same done of Black Cypress."[5] This decision is reflected in the *South Carolina Gazette* of 1 June 1734, where a notice for proposals to provide "good Black Cypress" appeared, listing a total of 240 pieces, defined with detailed dimensions, needed for "making of Carriages &c."

The Charleston import and export records for November 1736 to November 1737 reveal that 108,462 feet of "Pine & Cypress Plank and Boards" and 133,677 feet of "Pine and Cypress Timber" were exported.[6] Canoes made of cypress are mentioned repeatedly. One advertisement from May 1739 stated, "Taken up a large new Cyprus Canoe about 26 Feet long, and about 4 Feet wide, made out of a whole Tree."[7]

Writing in 1751, Bolzius distinguished varieties of cypress: "Cypresses, large forests full of them near the rivers, of unusual height and width. There are white and red ones: the latter type is the most durable. One prepares building lumber, boards, shingles,

and boats from it."[8] Both softwoods, pine and cypress, were listed in "Price-Current By the Hundred Foot" of the 12 January 1768 *South Carolina Gazette; and Country Journal*, with cypress of seven sizes listed, from "Half Inch, 65s." to "Two Inch, 5£."

The inventories and advertisements of Charleston cabinetmakers reveal the widespread use of cypress; since delineating these would be tedious and repetitive, some of the evidence for cypress found in the Thomas Elfe account book will be offered as an example. In May 1768 Elfe paid "William Saunders, merchant, for 3142 feet Cypress ¼ in. Boards @ 65/£102.2.3."[9] Elfe also sold cypress, as his 24 December 1771 record of the sale of "200 feet of Dry Cypress £9" to Arthur Middleton, planter, indicates.[10] In October 1773 William Sanders was paid "for 8870 feet of Cypress at 70/per hundred feet."[11] At Elfe's death his 11 September 1776 inventory contained "About two [thousand] feet Cypress boards & plank £60"; this was the second highest volume of any wood listed, after mahogany at ten thousand feet.[12]

In January 1796, the demand for cypress was aptly revealed through an advertisement for a tract of land for sale by Brian Cape & Son, merchants: "It is well timbered with a large quantity of cypress trees.... surely the timber may be applied to advantage, in sawing into boards, plank, &c. which is so much wanted at the Charleston market, and consequently command cash and a ready sale."[13] In 1802 John Drayton expressed his thoughts on cypress in his *View of South Carolina:* "Grows in fresh water swamps, in the lower country. This tree, for height and thickness, is the largest tree growing in this state. Some of them measure thirty feet circumference round the lower part of their stem; and, their wood is very lasting, and easy to work. Large boats are made of them, by joining two or three pieces together; and six or eight oared canoes, are sometimes made from a single tree. It affords plank and timber for various uses in building and agriculture; boards for panel work, and shingles for covering houses."[14] The Treasury Records of the Independent Congregational Church, Charleston, South Carolina, for December 1803 contain the account of James Badgers, carpenter, for work done to the church, which included cypress for window sills and "Black Cypress" for "Jaumbs"

[*sic*].[15] Advertising of cypress as shingles, boards, and plank continued into the nineteenth century, mainly by lumber yards and sawmills.

1. Sargent, *Manual of the Trees of North America*, 64–65; Harrar, *Hough's Encyclopedia of American Woods*, 131–39; Little, *Atlas of United States Trees*, map 84-F; Little, *Checklist of United States Trees*, 282. **2.** Mathews to Lord Ashley, in *Collections of the South Carolina Historical Society*, 333. **3.** Wilson, "An Account of the Province of Carolina," in Salley, 170. **4.** S.C. Judgement Rolls, Common Court of Pleas, Box 168A, #179, Jean DeBreuil vs. Francis LeBrasseur, 1713/14. **5.** Journal of the Upper House, 1726-1737, 18 May 1734, 18 May 1734, p. 633. **6.** *Pennsylvania Gazette*, 14 March 1737/38. **7.** *South Carolina Gazette*, 19 May 1739. **8.** Bolzius, part I, 237. **9.** Elfe Account book, Account #41 (stock). **10.** *Ibid.*, Account #67. **11.** *Ibid.*, Account #47. **12.** Charleston County Wills, vol. 94A, 1776–1778, 116, 11 September 1776. **13.** *Columbian Herald*, 8 January 1796 **14.** Drayton, *A View of South Carolina*, 80–81. **15.** *Accounts of the Independent Congregational (Circular) Church, Charleston, S.C., 1777–1806*, 31 December 1803, South Carolina Historical Society, Charleston.

Ebony Ebony (*Diospyros spp.*) is native to tropical Africa, the East Indies, and Asia. The species utilized are *D. melanoxylon* (green in color), *D. tomentosa*, *D. ebenaster*, and *D. crassifloria;* also, classified as coromandel wood, are: D. *macassar*, *D. kurzii*, *D. maramorata*, *D. oocarpa*, and *D. ebenum*. This tree attains a height of 70 feet and a trunk diameter of 2 to 3 feet. The wood ranges in color from green or red to black, with streaks and blotches of a lighter color. The solid black is the most prized. In furniture construction, ebony was used as a primary wood and for inlay; it was considered so important that French cabinetmakers derived their name, *ébéniste*, from this wood. Ebony turns and polishes well and was used for handles, moldings, turnings, and carving.[1]

There is little evidence for ebony being available in Charleston, as only three references to it can be located; however, that it was found at all is important enough, since it truly was an exotic wood. The first instance was a 10 May 1804 advertisement of F. Weir & Co., merchants, who announced the arrival of the ship *Enterprise* carrying a cargo of logwood, mahogany, and "5 Tons Ebony and Box Wood."[2] One incidence of ebony associated with a Charleston cabinetmaker was found in the 4 September 1806 inventory of Francis Joseph Lacroix, which listed "2 small pieces Ebony Wood $1.25" among his cabinetmaking effects.[3] The other mention of

ebony was in September 1812, in the advertisement of an Admiralty sale of the ship *Mary Ann* and her cargo of logwood, mahogany, "4 Tons Ebony," and lancewood spars.[4]

1. Hinckley, *Directory of the Historic Cabinet Woods*, 170–71, 173–79; Kribs, *Commercial Foreign Woods on the American Market*, 37–39. 2. *Charleston Courier*, 10 May 1804. 3. Charleston County Inventories, vol. D, 1800–1810, 4 September 1806, p. 407. 4. *City Gazette and Commercial Daily Advertiser*, 30 September 1812.

Gum, Sweet Sweet gum (*Liquidambar styraciflua*) is also called red gum or bilsted. The range of this hardwood is the eastern United States from Connecticut through Texas and into Mexico and Guatemala. Found in rich soil and in bottoms adjacent to rivers and swamps, the tree grows to a height of 80 to 140 feet and a trunk diameter of 4 to 5 feet. The wood is heavy, hard, straight, and close-grained, with brown to red heartwood and an almost white sapwood.[1] Identifying sweet gum can be problematic because there is a black gum that sometimes is also referred to as "gum."

Catesby listed sweet gum in his 1731 *Natural History of Carolina* as of a "Good timber—used in wainscoting, etc. Fine grain—some pieces of it for curious work in joinery. Wood must be seasoned for 8 to 10 years."[2]

The first mention of gum was found in the South Carolina Shipping Returns for 17 February 1721, when "20 Gum Plank" cleared the port of Charleston for Bristol, England.[3] The only documentary evidence for a craftsman having this wood was found in the 25 September 1746 inventory of the joiner Benjamin Elmes, who died with "200 feet Goom [*sic*] Boards £3.10."[4] Bolzius wrote of this wood, "Gum trees of unusual width: the wood is brown, very durable, and is used for hubs of wheels."[5] Drayton listed gum as occurring on the coast of South Carolina; he also distinguished, among swamp trees, gum as well as tupelo.[6]

1. Sargent, *Manual of the Trees of North America*, 367–68; Little, *Atlas of United States Trees*, map 135-E; Little, *Checklist of United States Trees*, 162–63. 2. Catesby, *Natural History of Carolina*, in Merrens. 3. South Carolina Shipping Returns, December 1721–December 1735, 17 February 1721. 4. *Charleston County Wills*, vol. 74, 1746–1748, 25 September 1746, p. 51. 5. Bolzius, part I, 237. 6. Drayton, *A View of South Carolina*, 6–9.

Hawthorn Hawthorn (*Crataegus spp.*), also called haw, thorn apple, hog apple, May haw, May hawthorn, or apple haw, represents the largest number of species of small trees and shrubs in the United States. It is therefore difficult to determine precisely the wood represented by the single documentary citation in Charleston. The small tree of *C. aestivalis* matures to a height of 20 to 25 feet and has a trunk or stem of only 6 to 8 inches in diameter; however, other species attain a height of 30 feet and a trunk diameter of one foot. The wood is hard and heavy.[1]

The single mention of this wood is found in the 15 October 1771 advertisement listing the contents of the estate of Michael Williams, coachmaker. His trade-related effects included "Ash and May-Apple Boards."[2] The term *May-apple* used here is assumed to be a variation on hawthorn or haw, since the use of this hardwood could be assumed to be trade-defined.

1. Sargent, *Manual of the Trees of North America*, 434–35; Little, *Checklist of United States Trees*, 101–18. 2. *South Carolina Gazette; and Country Journal*, 15 October 1771.

Hickory The growth distribution of hickory (*Carya spp.*, including *C. tomentosa*, *C. glabra*, *C. aquatica*, *C. ordiformis*, and *C. myristiciformis*) is limited to the eastern United States, where it is found in low areas adjacent to streams and rich soils. It reaches a height of 100 feet and a trunk diameter of 3 to 4 feet. The wood is heavy, hard, tough, strong, and nearly white in color.[1]

Maurice Mathews and Samuel Wilson both referred to this wood as "Hickery."[2] Catesby described hickory as "2 to 3 feet in diameter" and the wood as "coarse grained."[3] Drayton described the "Hickory Nut Tree" as "Grows in strong land. Its young saplings are used for hoop poles, and its timber for cogs."[4]

Documentation of hickory's use in furnituremaking is found only in the turner's trade. The 21 July 1752 inventory of John Owen, chairmaker, lists 12 "heart of hickory chairs" along with 2½ cords Chairwood [hickory?]" and "1 lot old Turning Tools."[5] In March 1804 the turner John Whiting advertised his production, which included "Hickory Sticks."[6] Another use for hickory is found in the sale advertisement of the property of Benjamin Casey, coach-

maker, which offers "A parcel Hickory Stuff, for bars," presumably to be used for coach frames.[7] The turner John Whiting advertised again on 21 September 1809, offering "hickory walking sticks."[8]

1. Sargent, *Manual of the Trees of North America*, 176–200; Little, *Atlas of United States Trees*, map 111-E, 112-E, 113-E, 117-E. 2. Mathews to Lord Ashley, in *Collections of the South Carolina Historical Society*, 354; Wilson, "An Account of the Province of Carolina," in Salley, 170. 3. Catesby, *Natural History of Carolina*, in Merrens. 4. Drayton, *A View of South Carolina*, 79. 5. *Charleston County Wills*, vol. 79, 1751–1753, 21 July 1752, pp. 419–21. 6. *Charleston Courier*, 5 March 1804. 7. *City Gazette and Daily Advertiser*, 23 July 1806. 8. *The Times*, 21 September 1809.

Holly Holly (*Ilex opaca*) is found on the coastal plain of the Low Country and in the southeastern United States. Other varieties are *I. cassine*, *I. vomitoria* (yaupon), and *I. decidua*. The height attained by *I. opacia* is 40 to 50 feet, with a trunk diameter of 2 to 3 feet. The wood is tough, light, and close-grained; it is white when cut, changing to brown with exposure, and accepts polishing.[1]

Robert Horne (1666) lists holly, as did Maurice Mathews and Robert Drayton; the latter described it as: "Grows in dry land: an evergreen. Its wood is very white; as such used by cabinet makers, for inlaying mahogany."[2] In March 1806 the Charleston cabinetmaker Jacob Cardoza wrote Jacob Henry, cabinetmaker in Beaufort, North Carolina, stressing the materials he needed and saying that in "Respect to Veneers, Holly & such other articles as you know are absolutely in the course of the business ... I must indispensibly have."[3] On 9 January 1810 an advertisement by Robert Walker, cabinetmaker, offers mahogany boards and veneers and "Sattinwood, Holly..."[4] The following April found Walker paying $8.25 for "320 ft. Holly Veneers Sawing @ 20/ [and] 25/ [for] carting."[5] On 6 June 1810 he paid $2.50 for "Coloring Holly."[6]

1. Sargent, *Manual of the Trees of North America*, 668–74; Little, *Atlas of United States Trees*, map 131-E; Little, *Checklist of United States Trees*, 147–50. 2. Horne, "A Brief Description of the Province of Carolina," in Salley, 68; Mathews to Lord Ashley, in *Collections of the South Carolina Historical Society*, 354; Drayton, *A View of South Carolina*, 81. 3. Jacob Henry Papers, 1806–1839, Blotter Book and Loose Papers, 24 March 1806, Manuscript Department, Duke University. 4. *Charleston Courier*, 9 January 1810. 5. Charles Watts Account Books, Book I, 1802–1811, and Book III, 1803–1811, entries for 14 April 1810, Joseph Downs Manuscript Collection, Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum. 6. *Ibid.*, Book III, 6 June 1810.

Horseflesh Horseflesh (*Lysiloma latisiliqua, L. bahamensis*), also called sabica or wild tamarind, is native to Florida, Mexico, the Bahamas, Cuba, the West Indies, and Central America. It grows to a height of 50 to 60 feet, with a trunk diameter of 2 to 3 feet. The close-grained wood is heavy, hard, not strong, and a rich dark brown color tinged with red or golden brown with dark streaks. The wood accepts a high finish.[1]

This wood occurs only twice in documents, once as stock in a 21 October 1766 advertisement of Weyman and Carne, cabinetmakers, who list "Horseflesh" as one of the woods available,[2] and once in the 11 September 1776 inventory of Thomas Elfe, cabinetmaker, who had owned "1 Horse flesh Table."[3]

1. Sargent, *Manual of the Trees of North America*, 589–91; Kribs, *Commercial Foreign Woods on the American Market*, 86. 2. *South Carolina Gazette; and Country Journal*, 21 October 1766. 3. Charleston County Wills, vol. 99A, 1776–1778, 11 September 1776, p. 116.

Juniper See *Cedar.*

Lancewood Lancewood (*Oxandra lanceolata*) is native to northern South America, Central America, and the West Indies. A heavy hardwood of a clear yellow color with an olive cast, it accepts a high polish and is easy to turn and carve.[1]

Apparently lancewood was available in Charleston, since there are several references to its use. The first is in an advertisement of the coachmaker Benjamin Casey who, on 17 March 1804, offered for sale "2 Top SULKIES, with Landswood [*sic*] Shafts."[2] Two years later, in February, the stock of James Clark, coachmaker, was sold; it contained "Ash Plank & Shafts, Lance Wood, Spokes, Logs, etc."[3] In September 1812 the ship *Mary Ann* was put up for sale together with her cargo, which included logwood, mahogany, ebony, and "50 Lancewood Spars."[4] In December 1813 Benjamin Casey again advertised riding chairs "with lancewood shafts" for sale.[5]

1. Kribs, *Commercial Foreign Woods on the American Market*, 11–12; F. W. Jane, *The Structure of Wood* (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1956), 13. 2. *The Times*, 17 March 1804. 3. *Charleston Courier*, 16 February 1807. 4. *City Gazette and Commercial Daily Advertiser*, Charleston, 30 September 1812. 5. *The Times*, 15 December 1813.

Lignum Vitae Lignum vitae (*Guaiacum officinale*) is native to Florida, the West Indies, Central America, Mexico, Columbia, and Nicaragua. Its wood is very hard and heavy, with a fine texture; it has a low, waxlike luster and is waxy to the touch. Its color is a light to dark olive brown, with darker streaks, occasionally with a greenish cast; its sapwood is yellow with dark green lines. It grows to a height of thirty feet, with a trunk diameter of up to twelve inches; in the past examples have been found with a diameter of twenty inches. This wood turns easily and is used where hardness is important.[1]

The British Public Record Office records show that from 1717 through 1766, most lignum vitae imported to Charleston originated in the Bahamas. From 1767 through 1772, the sources of cargo were not clearly defined.[2] The Bahamanian origin of lignum vitae is demonstrated in the earliest advertisement for its sale, from December 1732, announcing the arrival of the sloop *Speedwell* from [New] Providence, Bahamas, "laden with 10 Tons of Lignum Vitae."[3] Knowing the origin, use, and the nature of lignum vitae leads to the assumption that the "1 T[on] Turners wood" that arrived in Charleston on the sloop *Carolina*, in April 1738, from New Providence, Bahamas was itself lignum vitae.[4]

The c. 1746 inventory of the turner John Phipps revealed that along with his turning wheel and tools there was also listed "to Lignumvitey [*sic*] wood £1."[5] In November 1747 the "Price Current at Charles Town" was £18 per ton for lignum vitae.[6]

In August, September, and October 1766 advertisements by various merchants offered lignum vitae for sale.[7] The 15 April 1768 inventory of Thomas Mitchell, planter, revealed that at his plantation, in the cellar, there were "2 blocks Lignum Vitae £5."[8]

Edward Long's 1774 *History of Jamaica* discusses this wood as growing "in vast abundance on the South-side of the island [Jamaica].... The tree, at its full growth, rises to the height of forty feet, and measures from fifteen to eighteen inches in diameter. There are none of this size now left in Jamaica, such multitudes having been cut down, either for clearing land, or for exportation."[9] In February 1797 there was an advertisement of an auction

that included "7 Tons LIGNUMVITAE" to be held at Gasden's Wharf.[10] On 15 April 1803 the "Charleston Price Current" for lignum vitae was 30 to 40 dollars per ton.[11] In September 1803, lignum vitae was offered for sale by John W. Geyer, of Geyer's Wharf, as received from Nassau by the brig *Phoenix*.[12] Other listings of this wood were found in March 1804, with "Ten Tons LIGNUMVITAE," and the following August, as "20 Tons Lignum Vitae," the latter also fron Nassau, New Providence.[13] In March the following year, F. Weir & Co. had "About Thirty Tons Lignumvitae" for sale.[14] In December 1808, September 1809, and October 1812, John Whiting, turner, advertised his business enumerating "Lignumvitae Pestles, and Motars, Bowls, and Skettles [*sic*]."[15]

Blockmakers and the shipbuilding industry used large quantities of this wood, but these trades lie outside the scope of this study.

1. Kribs, *Commercial Foreign Woods on the American Market*, 164; Hinckley, *Directory of the Historic Cabinet Woods*, 168–70. 2. Converse D. Clowse, *Measuring Charleston's Overseas Commerce, 1717–1767* (Washington: University Press of America, 1981), 43. 3. *South Carolina Gazette*, 16 December 1732. 4. South Carolina Shipping Returns, March 1736–January 1764, April 1738. 5. *Charleston County Wills*, vol. 74, 1741–1748, 46–50, n.d. (c. 1746). 6. Philip M. Hamer, ed., *The Papers of Henry Laurens*, (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1968), I, 5 November 1747, 70–71. 7. *South Carolina Gazette; and Country Journal*, 19 August, 16 September 1766; *South Carolina and American General Gazette*, 31 October 1766. 8. Charleston County Inventories, *1763–1771*, 286–89, 15 April 1768. 9. Long, *The History of Jamaica*, 238, 724–25, 864. 10. *City Gazette and Daily Advertiser*, 14 February 1797. 11. *Charleston Courier*, 15 April 1803. 12. *Ibid.*, 10 September 1803. 13. *Ibid.*, 6 March, 22 August 1804. 14. *Ibid.*, 1 March 1805. 15. *Ibid.*, 16 December 1808; *The Times*, 21 September 1809, 3 October 1812.

Madeira Madeira (*Persea indica* and *P. canariensis*), also called Canarywood, is native to Madeira and the nearby Canary Islands. This wood is often considered an inferior yellow mahogany, although it is of the laurel (*Lauraceae*) family.[1] To complicate the nomenclature, *madeira* is not only the West Indian term for mahogany, it was the British term for Jamaican mahogany in England in the 1730s.[2] *Madeira* is also the Spanish word for wood.

The shipping records for Charleston indicate that "Madeira Plank" was first listed on 1 March 1724 as coming from [New] "Providence," Bahama Islands.[3] From 1730 to 1760 madeira wood, solely from the Bahamas, entered Charleston in greater volume

MUSEUM OF EARLY SOUTHERN DECORATIVE ARTS

than mahogany. The peak was reached in 1736, when madeira imports reached 400 percent of mahogany inports. By 1760 this had dropped to 4.17 percent, and after that date there was no further record of maderia being brought into Charleston.[4] One record of madeira imports from 7 November 1737 lists the sloop *May* arriving in Charleston from New Providence, with a cargo of "1 M of 2 inch Madera Plank, 900 ft. 13 inch Madera Plank, 200 ft. joists Madera Plank."[5] Further documentary evidence for madeira was found on 16 December 1732 with the arrival of the sloop *Elizabeth,* "from [New] Providence, with 100 feet Madera Plank, Fruit and Turtle."[6]

This author believes that the "madeira" entering Charleston was actually mahogany. The reason for cargos of wood being termed *madeira* was a matter of semantics, depending on the national origin of the describer. Although mahogany was imported to Charleston from 1724, it was not until 1 March 1748/9 that mahogany was listed in "Price Current."[7] It seems that from the 1730s the nomenclature stabilized, and mahogany became the preferred term for the wood.

It is interesting to note that throughout the documentary record, *madiera* was never used by woodworking craftsmen in Charleston. At least *they* knew what mahogany was!

1. Hinckley, *Directory of the Historic Cabinet Woods,* 55–56. 2. *Oxford English Dictionary,* vol. 6 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), M-17. 3. South Carolina Shipping Returns, December 1721–December 1735, 1 March 1724. 4. Clowse, *Measuring Charleston's Overseas Commerce,* Table A–54. 5. South Carolina Shipping Returns, March 1736–January 1764, 7 November 1737. 6. *South Carolina Gazette,* 16 December 1732. 7. *Ibid.,* 1 March 1748/9.

Mahogany Mahogany, also called American mahogany, is chiefly represented by two tropical species: *Swietenia mahagoni,* the West Indian variety, also known as Cuban or Spanish mahogany, and *S. macrophyllia,* the Central American variety, also known as Honduras or Baywood mahogany. Ranging from lightweight and soft to heavy and hard, the wood of mahogany ranges in color from a pale brown, pink, light red, or dark red to a reddish brown. Capable of being highly polished, the wood is easy to work

and often contains remarkable figure.[1] The tree attains a height of 150 feet and a trunk diameter of ten to fifteen feet.[2]

Histologically, the two species cannot be distinguished; however, their gross features apparently enabled the lumber merchant, the cabinetmaker, and others who constantly handled mahogany to classify it according to its place of origin.[3] West Indian mahogany (*S. mahagoni*) is heavy, hard, and close-grained, has a rich reddish-brown color, and contains white deposits, whereas the Central American mahogany (*S. macrophylla*) is less dense, with a color variance of yellowish brown to light reddish brown or a rich dark red; it is frequently marked with black specks or lines and a lesser amount of white deposits.[4] An example of the awareness of different types of mahogany is found in the 1776 will of the cabinetmaker Thomas Elfe, who left his son his "working tools, benches, mahoganies of all kinds, brasses."[5]

Mahogany is traditionally believed to have been introduced into Britain in the late seventeenth or early eighteenth century by a West India sea captain, the brother of an eminent London physician, Dr. Gibbons. Dr. Gibbons was completing a house in Covent Garden and had his carpenters try to use planks that his brother's ship had brought from the West Indies as ballast. Finding the wood difficult to cut, the carpenters could not use it. Some time later, Dr. Gibbons had one Woolaston, a cabinetmaker, make a candle box from the wood; when finished, it made such a fine presentation that Woolaston was called upon to make a bureau from the same wood. When this was finished "the fine colour, polish, &c. were so pleasing, that ... the Dutchess of Buckingham ... begged some ... wood ... and employed Woolaston to make her a bureau also ... and the wood became into general use."[6]

As mentioned under *madeira*, the author believes that "madeira wood" was in actuality mahogany. The first Charleston evidence for madeira, through importation records, was found on 1 March 1724.[7] The first mention of mahogany in Charleston was not until 31 December 1730, with the departure of a ship for London with "54 Mahogany Plank" as part of the cargo.[8] Further listings of mahogany plank bound for London occur on 13 April 1731 and 6 December 1731.[9] On 1 December 1732 the sloop *Prince of Orange*

arrived in Charleston with "2000 feet Mahogany Plank" from [New] Providence (now Nassau).[10] The evidence for mahogany used as a cabinet wood is overwhelming; what follows is a general listing of mahogany usage in Charleston.

On 19 August 1732, the first Charleston advertisement of furniture (tables and chairs) made of mahogany appeared; it announced that Robert Broomhead and Thomas Blythe were making furniture at New-Market Plantation.[11] The 23 January 1733/4 mortgage of Thomas Blythe included "five mahogany planks, 36 mahogany boards."[12] The "Report of Imports and Exports for Port of Charles Town, 1 Nov. 1736–1 Nov. 1737" revealed that "51756 feet of "Mahogany & Madera Plank & Boards" entered Charleston during that period.[13] Since both mahogany and madeira were listed, mahogany was still being called madeira by some. Another use of mahogany was revealed on 27 April 1738 with an advertisement concerning the launching of the ship *Duke of Cumberland,* which described it as "the finest Ship that was ever built here, all her Timber being Live Oak, and her Planks Mahogany."[14]

The Commons House of Assembly voted on 6 October 1743 to "make provision for exempting Mahogany Plank to be imported from Providence from payment of the Duties imposed by Law on Lumber."[15] On 11 July 1743 the merchant John Colcock and Company advertised offering "3 Inch and a half mahogany plank" for sale along with spirits, textiles, hats, etc.[16] On 1 March 1748/9 the "Prices Current" listing in the *South Carolina Gazette* first listed "Mahogany Plank, 27 L. 10 [by the hundred feet]." In April 1767 the merchants Davies and Wayne apparently had had an unfortunate experience; their advertisement offered a "FEW thousand feet of Mahogany, to any person except MR. SHORT THUMBS, his deputy or deputies."[17] Thomas Elfe's account book reveals the buying and selling of mahogany in his shop account (#63). In May 1768 Elfe paid £160 to "Capt. Hinman for Mahogany." In May 1771 he purchased "66 feet of Mahogany £19.16," in August 1771 "4251 feet of Mahogany @ L6 £251.1.2"; in September 1771 his account book recorded, "Johnston & Sampson being paid £123 for Mahogany." References to mahogany continue: the merchants

Oats and Russell were paid £182.12.6 for mahogany in June 1772 and £96.8 in June 1773, and the merchant G. A. Hall received £325.16.6 for mahogany in June 1774. From 1771 through 1773 the lumber merchants Cannon & Doughty bought mahogany from the Elfe business. Also, in May 1768 Elfe was paid for measuring 34,546 feet of mahogany for the merchant Robert Smyth.[17]

The account books of the cabinetmaker Charles Watts reveal his extensive involvement in "Adventure Mahogany Shipd on Board the Ship Diana ... & Ship Mercury ... Consigned to Messrs. Mckerlie by Ms Taggart Merchts. Glasgow by Whaley & Broadfoot—Dd Ms Taggart Mr Wm Cooke & Charles Watts all equally concerned—Shipped in Charleston, S.C. June 1803 for Greenock ... 360 Logs [mahogany] ... $22101.45 is £5157." The disposition of 80 of the 360 logs was entered as "10 Pieces [logs?] sold R[ober]t Walker ... J. Brown ... 70 Logs ... 100 [logs] sold at auction."[18] Consignments of mahogany to "Mr. Joseph Cole No. 5 Albion St Blackfriars Bridge London" were recorded in 1804, and again in 1807, when 253 out of 256 logs were sold in Liverpool, with all the purchasers and their log numbers listed.[19] In 1809, 123 logs were sold in New York, and later in the year more logs were sold in Charleston, with one sold as veneer.[20] Additional evidence for Watts selling mahogany is given under the mahogany sources listed below.

Much information is available in the newspapers concerning the sale of mahogany as logs, boards, and plank from wharfs in Charleston, the details of which are beyond the scope of this study. One advertisement in the Charleston *Courier* from 27 April 1818, indicates the use for which a particular form of mahogany board could be used: "To Cabinet-makers. Landing this day, from ship Corsair, from New York, 2000 feet of wide MAHOGANY BOARDS, Suitable for Sideboards and Bureaus."

Mahogany Veneer

Mahogany was the only wood used as veneer in Charleston during the period covered here. The first reference to mahogany veneer in Charleston was found in the 27 August 1741 inventory of Thomas Gasden as "1 Fineared Table –10–."[21] Another "Faneared

Table" was found in the 26 June 1742 inventory of Col. Alexander Hext's "Plantation of Pick-Pocket."[22] The first mention of wood for veneer in Charleston was suggested in the 9 October 1772 mortgage of the cabinetmaker Thomas Snead, which listed "1 Mahogany (Saw)" among his shop tools; this might indicate a veneer saw.[23] In April 1777, Lord William Campbell's inventory listed "[in the] Coach House & Stables ... Sundry Pieces of Mahogany ... for Fineering £4.4.0."[24] It is possible that a "Mahogany Sawyer" was one who cut veneer; in 1790 John Castine was listed as such, at 19 Beresford Street.[25]

The mahogany log "Adventure" of Charles Watts, mentioned above, also listed the cutting of preselected logs into veneers. On 4 February 1801 Watts advertised "Veneers" for the first time; prior to that date only logs, planks, and boards were offered.[26] In September 1802 the cabinetmaker John Vinyard advertised that he was declining business and offering his shop tools for sale, among them "Vineering Saws."[27]

A rare insight into an individual cabinetmaker's concern about veneers was found in the 24 March 1806 letter of the Charleston cabinetmaker Jacob Cardoza to Jacob Henry, also a cabinetmaker, of Beaufort, North Carolina. Cardoza remarks on his stock and says that he has "on hand—Two straight front sideboards—one large & one small which I can proceed on as far as making the drawers and then must put aside untill the arrival of the Veneers as for purchasing Veneers here it will not answer. independent of the reluctancy of the cabinetmakers to sell—if they could be got the price of them would far exceed the advantages which we could derive from their use.... [In] respect to Veneers, Holly & such other articles as you know are absolutely in the course of the business I must indispensibly have...."[28] The same year reveals the September inventory of the cabinetmaker Francis Joseph Lacroix, who had "17 Sheets Mahogany Wood for side boards & c. $4," which apparently was veneer.[29] In December 1807 Robert Walker, cabinetmaker, continued to advertise veneers for sale.[30] The 6 September 1808 inventory of the cabinetmaker Michael Muckenfuss reveals that among his shop items there were "51 Veneers $102."[31] The shape or design of Muskenfuss's veneers was not described; how-

ever, the 7 March 1809 advertisement of cabinetmaker Thomas Wallace's "stock of Mahogany, in planks and boards, with Veneers to suit all kinds of Cabinet Work" suggests that several varieties of veneer patterning were available.[32]

Further evidence for Charles Watts's involvement with mahogany was revealed on 1 June 1810 when he paid $1.00 for the "Sawing Open a Veneer Log . . . Jointly . . . [owned with] A. G. [Andrew Gifford, cabinetmaker] with half as .50." Apparently the log was sawn open to determine the value of having it cut into veneer, for in November, he paid for having log no. 13 sawn into veneers, which seems to have produced 292.6 board feet; he sold the veneers the next month, which amounted to "1963 ft [of veneer] @ 10/100." The veneers were sold to six Charleston cabinetmakers: John McIntosh, John Gross, Julian Henry, Abraham Jones, Richard Smith, and Gilbert Lapierre, each purchasing $32.72 worth of veneer. This log being jointly owned by Watts and Andrew Gifford, the profit was halved, which netted Watts $82.72. The Watts account books also revealed in the estate settlement that both Robert Walker (8 May 1812) and John McIntosh (30 June 1812) were "paid Sawing Veneers for him."[33]

The death of Hance Fairley, cabinetmaker, revealed his 15 March 1815 estate inventory as containg "A lot veneers $6."[34] On 6 February 1818 the auctioneer firm of Thomas Napier & Co. advertised an estate that included "4 Boxes Mahogany Vinears."[35] An unknown seller of mahogany advertised on 19 February 1818 that, in addition to plank and board mahogany, which had just landed from New York, he also was selling "4000 feet of handsome Veniers, and a great part of which are crotched." The following April the same merchant again advertised the arrival of mahogany as boards and "A few boxes of choice VENIERS, packed in small Lots of from 100 to 300 feet."[36] The advertisement of the 26 October 1818 sale of the stock of Jacob Sass, cabinetmaker, revealed "About 1000 feet Veniere . . . of fine St. Domingo Mahogany."[37] A fine advertisement of 11 March 1820 revealed that John Egleston and B. S. Ridgeway had established, in the City of Charleston, "their SAW MILL (the only one at present in the Southern States) erected for the sole purpose of Sawing Mahogany into Vineering, &c." They further

said that they would also supply mahogany as board or veneering. In May in the same newspaper the firm of Napier, Rapelye & Bennett advertised the offering of "Mahogany Veniers & Venetian Window Blinds," and went on to specify "4000 feet MAHOGANY VENIERS."[38] A surprising advertisement from 7 February 1821 by Charles P. L. Westendorff at the Vendue Range offered: "To Cabinet Makers. About 150 FEET MAHOGANY VENEERS, CUT IN EUROPE, And of Superior quality."[39]

Mahogany Sources

Africa. The African mahogany is not of the genus *Swietenia,* but *Khaya,* a genus native to tropical Africa. This wood possesses the properties of *Swietenia* and thus is used as a mahogany, particularly *K. ivorensis.*[40] Hinckley remarks, "African mahogany was not received in Britain until about 1830 at which time it was briefly tried as a cabinet wood. When furniture was made of *Khaya,* it was found unstable in drying and when finished and later aged, the wood took on a "fleshy colour . . . dirty purple" and thus fell into disuse as a cabinet wood.[41] This wood was not found in Charleston documents, it is mentioned here because some furniture historians have incorrectly described this wood as having been used in Charleston furniture.

Bay mahogany. See *Honduras mahogany.*

Campeachy. Campeachy is a town on the Bay of Campeachy on the western Yucatan coast. The "Price Current" list of 15 April 1803 included three types of mahogany: Bay (Honduras), Campeachy, and St. Domingo.[42] Neither the use of Campeachy mahogany in Charleston nor its arrival or departure through Charleston's port is revealed in the documentary record. The singular use of the term *Campeachy wood* indicated logwood (*Haematoxylon campechianum*), a source of dye for fabrics and leather.[43] Advertisements referring to this dye wood appeared occasionally: "Selling Cam-peachy Logwood at No. 9, Bay," on 29 January 1787, or "100 Tons of Campeachy LOGWOOD" for sale on 1 October 1795.[44]

Cuba. This mahogany is the West Indian, Spanish, or Cuban species (*S. mahogoni*), one of the two principal species.[45] The growth rate of this tree is much slower than Honduran mahogany, with the result that the wood is heavier and harder.[46] Sheraton classified Cuban mahogany as "of no figure in the grain ... pale, straight grained, and some of it only a bastard kind of mahogany.... It is generally used for chair wood, for which some of it will do very well."[47]

References to Cuban mahogany in Charleston were not many, but it was recognized by some as a type. The first mention, quoted from a London source in the 31 January 1786 *Charleston Evening Gazette*, extolled the virtues of Jamaican mahogany and noted that "It is equal to that of Hispaniola, or Cuba." On 17 March 1788 an advertisement in the *Columbian Herald* announced the arrival of "a choice Cargo of Mahogany and Spanish Hides from the coast of Cuba." The following April found another advertisement for "Two cargoes of Choice Mahogany ... now landing at Mr. Corchran's wharf from the Island of Cuba."[48] The "Prices Current" list in the *Columbian Herald* does not list Cuban mahogany, only Jamaican and Honduras.

On 28 September 1809, an advertisement offered as having arrived from Cuba, "MAHOGANY, in logs and boards."[49] In April 1816 the schooner *Mechanic* arrived in Charleston and contained "About 15,000 feet Choice Cuba Mahogany" for sale.[50]

Honduras. This species, *S. macrophylla*, is the Central American mahogany variously termed Honduras mahogany, Bay mahogany, and Baywood.[51] Though *S. macrophylla* is a single species, eighteenth- and nineteenth-century writers were conscious of variations in wood quality resulting from soil conditions during growth. Thomas Laslett, the late nineteenth-century British author of *Timber and Timber Trees*, stated that "the quality of the wood varies very much, according to the situation in which it is grown; that which is produced on a firm soil and in exposed places, and notably that grown in the northern district [of Honduras or Central America?], being by far the best, while the timber produced on the low moist grounds is generally soft, spongy, and inferior."[52]

This echoes Thomas Sheraton's 1803 statement, "From this province [Honduras] is imported [into Britain] the principal kind of mahogany in use among cabinet-makers, which generally bears the name of Honduras mahogany, and sometimes Bay-wood, from the bay or arm of the sea which runs up to it.... The best quality of Honduras wood is known by its being free from chalky and black speckles, and when the colour is inclined to a dark gold hue. The common sort of it looks brisk at a distance, and of a lively pale red; but, on close inspection, is of an open and close grain, and of a spongy appearance."[53]

Possibly the "common sort" Sheraton was referring to is Bay mahogany or Baywood. The Bay (or Gulf) of Honduras extends from the southeast coast of the Yucatan at Belize to the eastern end of the Mosquito Coast (*q.v.*) of Honduras at Nicaragua. Within this area, along the northern coast of Honduras, are the Bay Islands (Utila, Ruatan, and Bonacca) where traders and timber cutters of logwood and mahogany stopped as a center of their activities; hence, they were termed "Baymen" as working in the Bay.[54]

The importation of both Honduras and Bay mahogany to Charleston should be considered as a whole, with the differences in origins being self-revealing. The first evidence for this was found in the shipping records for 19 September 1763 with the arrival of "400 Logs Mahogany & 3 Tons of Logwood" on the sloop *Harmony* from Honduras.[55] On 18 March 1766, the firm of David Stoddard & Co. advertised the sale of "ABOUT thirty-five thousand feet of choice MAHOGANY, just arrived ... from Honduras."[56] An entry in the shipping returns five days earlier revealed that 35,000 feet of Mahogany had arrived from Honduras on the ship *Sword Fish*.[57] Later, in October of the same year, the firm of Johnston & Simpson advertised "About Thirty Thousand feet of Mahogany, just arrived from the Bay of Honduras." This was followed by another offering of the same firm in January 1767 as "A CARGO of fine Honduras MAHOGANY and, LOGWOOD, just arrived in Capt. Chace, from the Bay."[58] In June 1787 the merchants James and Ed. Penman advertised that they had "Just imported ... Mahogany, from the Bay of Honduras."[59] In

April 1788 the "Price Current" list contained "Jamaica and Honduras Mahogany."[60]

By 1789 the term *Bay mahogany* for mahogany from Honduras was in general use in Charleston. An advertisement illustrating this appeared 11 July 1789, announcing an auction of the cargo of the schooner *Hope*, "fifteen thousand feet Bay Mahogany," at Eveleigh's wharf.[61] Further differentiation in mahogany type was found in November 1797 in the advertisement of John Milligan, lumber merchant, for "A QUANTITY of Saint Domingo Mahogany [and] a quantity of HONDURAS MAHOGANY."[61] Then, on 15 April 1803, as if the term was standard, "Mahogany, Bay" appeared in the "Charleston Price Current" list along with "Campeachy" and "St. Domingo."[62]

The account books of Charles Watts reveal an account from 3 October 1803 through 31 August 1804 for "Honduras Mah[ogan]y," which contains entries of logs to Greenock, Glasgow, and New York.[63] On 22 December 1803, a small parcel of "Choice Bay Mahogany" was offered for sale, along with "the Brig POLLY." In January and June of the following year "Bay Mahogany" was also advertised.[64] The firm of Bours & Bascome advertised in February and May 1816 that they had "about 10,000 feet of best Honduras MAHOGANY," part of the cargo of the British cutter *William*, for sale. On 9 December 1816 "26 Logs Honduras Mahogany, and A quantity of first quality St. Domingo MAHOGANY" was also offered by Bours & Bascome, possibly the end of the cargo of the *William*.[65] The merchants Miller and Bates advertised, on 19 February 1818, "To Cabinetmakers, 6,500 Feet choice St. Domingo and Bay Mahogany, consisting of inch plank, 3-8, 5-8, and 7-8 Boards, 4000 feet of Handsome Veniers, a great part of which are crotched."[66]

Jamaica. Another West Indian mahogany (*S. mahogoni*) was the type from Jamaica, called "Jamaica Wood." This term was first found in the British import records for 1699 to 1700, as "Jamaica Wood, Mahogony [*sic*], 36 pc £5."[67] Edward Long's 1774 *History of Jamaica* describes the role "Jamaican mahogany" played as a collective term for West Indian mahogany; in a discussion of the fine

quality of mahogany grown in Jamaica, Long explains how "as a large quantity of balks [a beam or rafter] and plank is brought from the Spanish American coasts to this island, to be shipped from thence to Great Britain, the dealers are apt to confound all under the name of Jamaica wood."[68] The 1853 *Cabinet-Maker's Assistant,* published in London, described this mahogany as "marked by a wild irregular figuring and deep colouring, more resembling tortoise-shell than the mahogany in use at present."[69] This appreciation of Jamaican mahogany was also expressed by Long when he described how mahoganies were removed from the forest. "In felling these trees, the most beautiful part is commonly left behind. The Negroe workmen raise a scaffolding, of four or five feet elevation above the ground, and hack off the trunk, which they cut up into balks. The part below, extending to the root, is not only of largest diameter, but of a closer texture than the other parts, most elegantly diversified with shades or clouds, or dotted, like ermine, with black spots; it takes the highest polish, with a singular lustre, so firm as even to reflect objects like a mirror. This part is only to be come at by digging below the spur to the depth of two or three feet, and cutting it through; which is so laborious an operation, that few attempt it, except they are uncommonly curious in their choice of the wood, or to serve a particular order."[70]

The British taste for mahogany from Jamaica is further revealed in a 9 April 1766 letter from Henry Cruger, Jr., of Bristol, England, to Aaron Lopez of Rhode Island. Cruger, a merchant, wrote, "I am sorry so much more Mahogany is coming by the [ship] America. I can't tell what I shall do with it. I have halled about a quarter of the [ship] Newport Packet's away, in order to lessen the quantity in the Eyes of the Buyer's, as well as to make room on our Keys. The great piles that now remain on the Key get me a rap over the Nuckles every time I fall in company with our Mayor, but I laugh it off, saying it will soon be removed and so forth. If you can meet with some fine Jamaica Mahogany of proper lengths and good breadths, it will sell from 10d to 1/per foot."[71]

The first evidence for Jamaican mahogany in Charleston was a February 1766 advertisement of William Parker, merchant, who was offering "a Parcel of Jamaica Mahogany."[72] In February 1785

James and Edward Penman, merchants, advertised "Just imported from Jamaica ... a quantity of very fine Jamaica Mahogany."[73] At this time in London, Jamaica mahogany was still being sold; the *Charleston Evening Gazette* of 17 December 1785 quoted an auction that included this wood. Also, in January 1786, the same source quoted an earlier (10 November 1785) London source as saying: "Our imports of Mahogany from Jamaica have turned out very good; some of it of fine quality and dimensions, has sold at 2s. 8p. per foot."[74] In January 1787 the two Penmans were again advertising Jamaica mahogany for sale.[75] April of the following year found Jamaica mahogany on the "Price Current" list for Charleston as selling for 5d. to 6d. per foot compared to Honduras mahogany for 4d to 5d per foot.[76] The last evidence found was in January 1789: "A small parcel of choice Jamaica Mahogany in Plank" was being offered by Lawson, Price & Co., merchants.[77] This decline in availability was echoed by Long in 1774: "This graceful and valuable tree, which furnishes a constant share towards the annual exports from the island, grew formerly in very great abundance along the coast; but, having been almost exterminated from those parts in process of time, it is at present found chiefly in the woodland, mountainous recesses, where vast quantities of it still remain, particularly in the uncultivated districts of Clarendon, and the leeward parishes."[78]

Mosquito Coast. The eastern coast of Honduras and the northern coast of Nicaragua was termed the Mosquito Coast or Mosquito Shore. In this area the "Baymen" lived who cut both mahogany and logwood.[79] Mahogany from this area, called Mosquito mahogany, was being received in England, as revealed in a 1 August 1768 letter from Henry Cruger, Jr., a merchant in Bristol, England, to Aaron Lopez of Rhode Island: "Mosqueto Mahogany I think is getting up again. A small Cargo sold the other day from 5d to 6d per foot."[80] The first evidence of the Mosquito Coast being so termed as a source of mahogany for the Charleston market was found in the shipping records on 31 May 1763, when the *Little Becky* of Newport arrived with a cargo of "2400 Mahogany Plank" from "Musquito Shore."[81] Evidence of an apparent ability to recog-

nize mahogany of this origin was found in a notice of 1 September 1766 with "TAKEN UP A-DRIFT, Aug. 29th, A LARGE piece of MAHOGANY, of the kind generally brought from the *Musquito-Shore*, without any mark whatever upon it."[82] This also implied that mahogany from this source had been arriving in Charleston prior to this date. It was identified again on 15 October 1787 in an advertisement offering "A Quantity just arrived ... from Musquito-Shore, and for sale by Jennings & Woddrop."[83] These two references were the only ones found for Charleston; undoubtedly after that time all mahogany from this area was termed either Honduras or Bay.

Providence (New Providence, Nassau in the Bahamas). This island was named New Providence to distinguish it from the island of Old Providence located south of Jamaica, north of Central America, and east of Nicaragua. Mahogany from "Providence" was first recorded in Charleston on 1 December 1732, when the sloop *Prince of Orange* entered with "2000 feet Mahogany Plank."[84] The probability that the "Madeira Plank" that first entered Charleston on 1 March 1724 from [New] Providence was actually mahogany has been previously discussed (see *Madeira*); however, the first record of mahogany from New Providence is dated December 1732. On 7 July 1735, "657 Feet Mahogany Plank" was recored as entering Charleston from "Providence."[85] On 5 June 1736 the "Sloop Gypsie of South Carolina" entered Charleston with "800 feet of Mahogany Plank."[86] The importance of this record is that it specified *New* Providence for the first time, which, since future references consistently indicate New Providence, suggests that earlier references had indicated Old Providence. These references continued to be found through 1766 in the shipping records, along with mahogany "sets of Bed Posts" or "Bedsteads" in the same cargos.

In April 1785, an auction of wood was held in Charleston that included "about 6000 feet of New-Providence MAHOGANY, as it now lies on Roper's wharf, as good as ever imported; and as it is all three and a half inch planks, is on that account more valuable."[87] Differentiation of various types of mahogany was found in the December 1785 and January 1786 *Charleston Evening Gazette*,

which carried discussions of London auction sales listing both Jamaica and Providence mahogany.[88] In January 1804, the source of Mahogany in one announcement was given as Nassau, as the port for New Providence.[89]

Saint Domingo. Saint Domingo or Santo Domingan mahogany, also termed Spanish mahogany, is the *S. mahagoni* of the West Indian classification.[90] This timber has a fine texture and close grain and is hard and heavy. In 1875 Laslett said this mahogany was close to the quality of Cuban mahogany; he described its veneer as follows: At the "top of the stem, where it branches off, there is generally a rich and pretty feather or curl in it, which is much prized by cabinetmakers, especially when it is of sufficient length for table tops, or the fronts of drawers."[91] Thomas Sheraton discussed the island of "Hispaniola, or St. Domingo [which] produces dying woods, and mahogany of a hardish texture, but it is not much in use with us."[92] This British statement of 1803 is interesting, since the first mention of Saint Domingo mahogany in Charleston was not until November 1797 and continued through 1820. This November 1797 offering was advertised by John Milligan, lumber merchant: "A QUANTITY OF SAINT DOMINGO MAHOGANY Just arrived and Loading on Cochran's Wharf.... Also, a Quantity of HONDURAS MAHOGANY."[93] In April 1803 the "Charleston Price Current" listed three mahoganies: Bay, Campeachy, and St. Domingo, with the latter being offered as the lowest price per foot.[94]

The Charles Watts account books reveal that in June 1803 he entered "Adventure St. Domingo Mahy. to Liverpool Consigned to Meldrum—J.Walker—Mercht. Liverpool" which consisted of "61 Logs neat 10212 feet [at] Dollars 1989.24 cents [or] £452.14.7."[95] On 11 January 1806 Andrew Holmes & Co. advertised that "The Schooner JOSEPH (Just arrived from Santo Domingo). The Cargo of said vessel ... 12,000 feet prime ST. Domingo MAHOGANY." The following month found William Porter advertising "28,000 Feet of St. Domingo Mahogany" to be sold at public auction.[96] In December of the following year there was an advertisement for the sale of "40,000 feet of prime St. Domingo MAHOGANY."[97] This

wood also was sold in log form, as an August 1811 advertisement of William Muir, merchant, illustrates, offering "one hundred Logs St. Domingo MAHOGANY, of a superior quality." The cabinetmaking firm of Munro and May advertised in November 1817 that they were offering "a few thousand feet of St. Domingo Mahogany Boards and Plank, of the finest quality."[98] Further evidence of St. Domingo mahogany being shipped to Liverpool was seen on 22 June 1818 with the sale of the cargo of the British ship *Carlbury*; while in transit from St. Domingo to Liverpool, it had to put into Charleston in distress. A part of the cargo was "About 40,000 feet of Prime St. Domingo Mahogany."[99]

The cabinetmaker Robert Walker advertised on 21 October 1819 "30 logs St. Domingo Crotch MAHOGANY" as being available through 53 Church Street. On 5 March 1821 an advertisement of S. Davenport & Co., merchants, offered "58 Logs St. Domingo MAHOGANY, several of which are Crotches."[100]

1. Kribs, *Commercial Foreign Woods on the American Market*, 113; Jane, *The Structure of Wood*, 16. **2.** Hinckley, *Directory of the Historic Cabinet Woods*, 119. **3.** Jane, *The Structure of Wood*, 342. **4.** Hinckley, *Directory of the Historic Cabinet Woods*, 124; Jane, *The Structure of Wood*, 342. **5.** *Charleston County Wills*, no. 18, 1776–1784, 7 July 1776, p. 88. **6.** *Maryland Journal & Baltimore Advertiser*, Baltimore, 3 March 1786; also cited in *Encylopaedia; or, a Dictionary of Arts, Sciences ...* (Philadelphia: Thomas Dobson, 1798), XVIII, 239. **7.** South Carolina Shipping Returns, December 1721–December 1735; *Ibid.*, 1 March 1724. **8.** 31 December 1730. **9.** *Ibid.*, 13 April, 6 December 1731. **10.** *Ibid.*, 1 December 1732. **11.** *South Carolina Gazette*, 19 August 1732. **12.** Charleston County, S.C., *Land Records*, Miscellaneous, Pt. 15, Books L–P, 1722–1736, 23 January 1733/4, pp. 291–300. Henceforth cited as Charleston County Land Records. **13.** *Pennsylvania Gazette*, Philadelphia, 14 March 1737/8. **14.** *South Carolina Gazette*, 27 April 1738. **15.** *The Journal of the Commons House of Assembly*, September 14, 1742–January 27, 1744, 6 October 1743, p. 466. **16.** *South Carolina Gazette*, 11 July 1743, 27 April 1767. **17.** Thomas Elfe Account Books, Accounts #63, #49. **18.** Charles Watts Account Books, Book III, 122–23; Book IV, 265. **19.** *Ibid.*, Book III, 140–41, 190–91; Book IV, 308–9, 313–14. **20.** *Ibid.*, Book IV, 302–3, 385–86. **21.** Charleston County Wills, 1741–1748, 27 August 1741, pp. 97–109. **22.** *Ibid.*, 187–93, 26 June 1742 (recorded). **23.** Charleston County, *South Carolina Mortgages*, No. DDD., 1771–1777, 9 October 1772, p. 222. **24.** Charleston County Inventories, Public Record Office, T.1/541, April(?) 1777. **25.** Jacob Milligan's city directory of Charleston, 1790. **26.** *City Gazette and Daily Advertiser*, 4 February 1801. **27.** *The Times*, 13 September 1802. **28.** Jacob Henry Papers, 24 March 1806. **29.** Charleston County Inventories, vol. D, 1800–1810, 407, 4 September 1806. **30.** *The Times*, 9 December 1807. **31.** Charleston County Inventories, vol. D, 1800–1810, 476–77, 6 September 1808. **32.** *The Times*, 7 March 1809. **33.** Watts Account Books, Book IV, 385–86; Book V, 501; Book VI, 523. **34.** Charleston County Inventories, Book E, 1810–1818, 15 March 1815, p. 270. **35.** *Southern Patriot and Commercial Advertiser*, 6 February 1818. **36.** *Charleston Courier*, 19 February, 27 April 1818. **37.** *Ibid.*, 19 October 1818. **38.** *City Gazette and Commercial Daily Advertiser*, 11

March 1820; 10 May 1820. **39.** *The Times,* 7 February 1821. **40.** Jane, *The Structure of Wood,* 339–42; Kribs, *Commercial Foreign Woods on the American Market,* 111–12. **41.** Hinckley, *Directory of the Historic Cabinet Woods,* 129, 130. **42.** *Charleston Courier,* 15 April 1803. **43.** Hinckley, *Directory of the Historic Cabinet Woods,* 114–15. **44.** *Charleston Morning Post and Daily Advertiser,* 29 January 1787; *South Carolina State Gazette and Timothy & Mason's Daily Advertiser,* 1 October 1795. **45.** Jane, *The Structure of Wood,* 16, 339. **46.** Hinckley, *Directory of the Historic Cabinet Woods,* 121, 127–28. **47.** Sheraton, *Cabinet Dictionary,* I, 184; II, 254. **48.** *Columbian Herald,* 17 March 1788; 7 April 1788. **49.** *Charleston Courier,* 28 September 1809. **50.** *City Gazette and Commercial Daily Advertiser,* 2 April 1816. **51.** Jane, *The Structure of Wood,* 16, 339. **52.** Thomas Laslett, *Timber and Timber Trees* (London, 1875), quoted in Hinckley, 128–29. **53.** Sheraton, *Cabinet Dictionary,* II, 253–54. **54.** Cyril Hamshere, *The British in the Caribbean* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972), 168–73. **55.** South Carolina Shipping Returns, 19 September 1763. **56.** *South Carolina Gazette; and Country Journal,* 18 March 1766. **57.** South Carolina Shipping Returns, 13 March 1766. **58.** *South Carolina Gazette; and Country Journal,* 21 October 1766; 5 January 1767. **59.** *Charleston Morning Post, and Daily Advertiser,* 18 June 1787. **60.** *Columbian Herald,* 7 April 1788. **61.** *City Gazette, or the Daily Advertiser,* 11 July 1789; 28 November 1797. **62.** *Charleston Courier,* 15 April 1803. **63.** Charles Watts Account Books, 3 October 1803. **64.** *Charleston Courier,* 22 December 1803; 18 January, 12 June 1804. **65.** *The Times,* 26 February, 9 December 1816; *Charleston Courier,* 31 May 1816. **66.** *Southern Patriot and Commercial Advertiser,* 19 February 1818. **67.** Hinckley, *Directory of the Historic Cabinet Woods,* 124–25. **68.** Long, *The History of Jamaica,* 843. **69.** *Cabinet-Maker's Assistant* (London, 1853). **70.** Long, *The History of Jamaica,* 844. **71.** *Commerce of Rhode Island 1726–1800,* I, 1726–1774 (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1914), 153. **72.** *South Carolina Gazette; and Country Journal,* 11 February 1766, supplement. **73.** *South Carolina Gazette, and Public Advertiser,* 19 February 1785. **74.** *The Charleston Evening Gazette,* 17 December 1785; 31 January 1786. **75.** *Charleston Morning Post and Daily Advertiser,* 31 January 1787. **76.** *Columbian Herald,* 7 April 1788. **77.** *City Gazette, or the Daily Advertiser,* 5 January 1789. **78.** Long, *The History of Jamaica,* 842. **79.** *Ibid.,* 327; J. H. Parry and P. M. Sherlock, *A Short History of The West Indies* (London: Macmillan, 1971), 121. **80.** *Commerce of Rhode Island,* 246. **81.** South Carolina Shipping Returns, 31 May 1763. **82.** *South Carolina Gazette,* 1 September 1766. **83.** *The Columbian Herald,* 15 November 1787; *City Gazette and Daily Advertiser,* 26 November 1787. **84.** South Carolina Shipping Returns, 1 December 1732. **85.** *Ibid.,* 7 July 1735. **86.** *Ibid.,* 5 June 1736. **87.** *South Carolina Gazette, and Public Advertiser,* 6 April 1785. **88.** *Charleston Evening Gazette,* 17 December 1785; 31 January 1786. **89.** *Charleston Courier,* 18 January 1804. **90.** Jane, *The Structure of Wood,* 339. **91.** Hinckley, *Directory of the Historic Cabinet Woods,* 127. **92.** Sheraton, *Cabinet Dictionary,* II, 252–53. **93.** *City Gazette and Daily Advertiser,* 28 November 1797. **94.** *Charleston Courier,* 15 April 1803. **95.** Watts Account Books, Book III, 13 June 1803. **96.** *Charleston Courier,* 11 January 1806; 8 February 1806. **97.** *The Times,* 29 December 1807. **98.** *Charleston Courier,* 10 August 1811; 20 November 1817. **99.** *Ibid.,* 22 June 1818. **100.** *City Gazette and Commercial Daily Advertiser,* 21 October 1819; 5 March 1821.

Mulberry Mulberry (*Morus ruba*), specifically the red mulberry or moral, is a hardwood that enjoys a range over most of the eastern United States. It grows to a height of 60 to 70 feet, with a trunk diameter of 3 to 4 feet. The wood is coarse-grained, soft, and

light orange in color with a lighter colored sapwood.[1] The *M. ruba* is one of two native American mulberry species; the Mexican mulberry (*M. microphylla*) grows from the lower Midwest into Mexico. The white mulberry (*M. alba*) was introduced into the United States from China and planted for its white fruit as well as a source of food for silkworms.

In 1682 Thomas Ashe, in describing "Carolina," commented that "The Mulberry Tree every-where amidst the Woods grows wild: The Planters, near their Plantations in Rows and Walks, plant them for Use, Ornament and Pleasure."[2] In his 1731 *Natural History of Carolina,* Mark Catesby states that the red mulberry is the "only native mulberry tree to Carolina." Of the "Silk-Worm mulberry tree" he says that it was "Introduced into Virginia by Sir William Berkley when he was Governor [1641–1651/2]. Later the tree was propogated in Carolina."[3] In the mid-eighteenth century the black mulberry was introduced; by 1809, when Ramsay published *The History of South Carolina,* he mentioned that "its wood makes furniture."[4]

The sole reference to this wood being available as lumber was found in August 1788; Moses G. Crosby, merchant, advertised "Any Gentleman desirous of contracting for any quantities (be it large or small) of live oak, red Bay, Mulberry, or cedar timbers for shipping, may be supplied."[5]

1. Sargent, *Manual of the Trees of North America,* 329–30; Little, *Checklist of United States Trees,* 173–174; Little, *Atlas of United States Trees,* map 139-E. 2. Ashe, "Carolina, or a Description of the Present State of that Country," in Salley, 143. 3. Catesby, *The Natural History of Carolina, Florida, and The Bahama Islands,* I, in Merrens. 4. Little, *Checklist of United States Trees,* 174; Ramsay, *History of South-Carolina,* II, 336. 5. *The City Gazette or the Daily Advertiser,* 30 August 1788.

Oak The numerous species of oak are all found in the Low Country and could have been used as timber. They include *Quercus alba* (white), *Q. falcata* (southern red), *Q. laurifolia* (laurel or water), *Q. lyrata* (overcup), *Q. marilandica* (blackjack), *Q. michauxii* (swamp chestnut), *Q. nigra* (water), *Q. phellos* (willow), *Q. Shumardii* (shumard), *Q. velutina* (black), and *Q. virginiana* (live). Oaks are of two types: white and red. Of the two, white oak

has always been thought of as producing timber that is stronger, less porus, heavier, and more resistant to decay.[1]

Oaks were listed by the earliest chroniclers of Charleston; Robert Horne wrote in 1666, "[Carolina] abounds with variety of as brave Okes as Eye can behold, great Bodies tall and streight from 60 to 80 foot, makes the Woods very commodious to travel in either on Horseback or a foot."[2] Thomas Ashe said in 1682 that "the Oak [is] of three sorts, the White, Black, and Live Oak; which for Toughness, and the Goodness of its Grain is much esteemed."[3] In 1731 Catesby said of white oak that it "resembles English Oak; fine grain; BEST Oak."[4]

Oak's aesthetic value is reflected in the July 1736 advertisement of Richard Marten, who offered his services in "House, Sign, and Ship-painting and glazing Work done after the best manner, imitation of Marble, Walnut, Oak, Cedar, & c. at five shillings a yard."[5] In April 1738 the ship *Duke of Cumberland* was launched at Charleston; an announcement in the *South Carolina Gazette* on 27 April informed that "all her Timber [is of] live Oak."

The trades of coachmaker, wheelwright, and riding-chair maker all made extensive use of oak. Red oak was used for shingles and barrel staves. White oak used in shipbuilding was referred to in January 1800 with the advertisement of Theodore Gaillard, Jr., at Gaillard's Wharf, who was offering "Ten thousand or more feet WHITE-OAK PLANKS, for Ship-Building 2 inches to 3 inches thick, will answer extremely well for heavy freight for vessels loading with cotton."[6] John Drayton, in 1802, described the attributes and uses of several types of oak, but none were indicated for furniture.[7] In April 1803 the "Charleston Price Current" listed "Oak Boards" and "red oak hhd [hogsheads]."[8] In December 1805 an advertisement of Pierce & Tillinghast, merchants, offered white oak and ash plank from Providence, Rhode Island, which would be "suitable for [riding] Chair-making."[9] David Ramsay, in 1809, listed the oaks and their uses and described white oak as being used "split into thin laminae for the purpose of making baskets, hoops, whip handles, & c." Ramsay further reiterates live oak's attributes in shipbuilding, and writes that "Ships built of Live-oak, have been known to last upwards of forty years."[10] The taste for oak

in room decoration is reflected in an 1817 advertisement by S. G. West, house painter in the "Plain and Ornamental," who offered his abilities to "resemble Portland Stone, Satin Wood, Air [Hair] Wood, Mahogany, English Oak and Marble."[11]

1. Sargent, *Manual of the Trees of North America,* 237–309; Little, *Atlas of United States Trees,* Maps 157-E, 165-E, 168-E, 169-E, 171-E, 174-E, 175-E, 178-E, 181-E, 183-E, 184-E; Little, *Checklist of United States Trees,* 221–245; Hinckley, *Directory of the Historic Cabinet Woods,* 71. 2. Horne, "A Brief Description of the Province of Carolina," in Salley, 68. 3. Ashe, "Carolina, or a Description of the Present State of that Country," in Salley, 144. 4. Catesby, *The Natural History of Carolina,* II, in Merrens. 5. *South Carolina Gazette,* 17 July 1738. 6. *Carolina Gazette,* 23 January 1800. 7. Drayton, *A View of South Carolina,* 78. 8. *Charleston Courier,* 15 April 1803. 9. *Ibid.,* 9 December 1805. 10. Ramsay, *History of South-Carolina,* II, 265, 291, 339. 11. *Charleston Courier,* 2 June 1817.

Pine Several species of pine native to coastal South Carolina belong to the pitch or yellow pine group. They include *Pinus echinata* (shortleaf), *P. elliottii* (slash), *P. glabra* (spruce), *P. palustris* (longleaf), *P. serotina* (pond), and *P. taeda* (loblolly). The soft or white pine, *P. strobus,* was imported from the Northeast and the New York area; it grows in higher altitudes and was not available locally in Charleston. The pitch pines are hard and heavy, light to dark in color, and coarse-grained; they range in growth from 75 to 120 feet in height and up to 6 feet in diameter at the trunk. The soft pines have wood that is light brown, not strong, soft, and straight-grained; they grow to a height of 220 feet with a trunk diameter of up to 6 feet.[1]

The presence of pines was noted early in the exploration of the Carolina coast. "Pines tall and good" are mentioned in 1664 by William Hilton, and in 1666 Sir John Yeamans, in surveying the Port Royall area of South Carolina, noted some "Pine trees but of the sort which is called spruce....The Pines are all spruce.... Att a venture wee called those kind of lands pine swamps." Since Yeamans did not name cypress in his list of trees, his "pines" growing in swamps seem to have actually been cypress.[2] Samuel Wilson (1682) wrote that the "Pynes [are] big enough to Mast the greates Ships."[3]

The first merchandising evidence for pine in Charleston was found in the April 1692 inventory of Wilson Dunston, merchant,

as "1056 feet pine boards at 4ps. pr Lb foot £2-2-2," along with planks of poplar.[4] In May two years later, another merchant's inventory, that of John Vansusteren, revealed boards and plank of cedar and "2119 foote of pine Timber £7-19-" and "3 pieces of pine qt.[?] 25 foote £-2-."[5] The first evidence found for the importation of pine was found in the shipping returns entered for Charleston between March 1719 and mid-summer 1719, when the ship *Lunenberg* entered from Boston with a cargo of "Dry Goods, Wine Brandy as per certificate 17000 ft. Pine Boards." Given its origin, one could assume that this was white pine.[6]

Mark Catesby's 1722–1725 visit to South Carolina apparently revealed information for his 1731 description in his *Natural History* of four types of pines in Carolina and the value of the pitch pine, which he discussed extensively in "The Manner of Making Tar and Pitch."[7] A November 1735 advertisement informed readers that Thomas Walker, timber merchant, "who lives about five miles from Charles Town up Wando River, [offered] Pine timber, boards & plank of what dimensions they please, for Vessels & houses, and of the best sort of Pine, likewise good Masts and Yards of what dimensions that please."[8]

As white pine was also made available by merchants a terminology developed for types of pine. Hard pine was listed as yellow pine, hard pine, Edisto [Island] yellow pine, pitch pine, and heart pine. Of course, generic listings under "pine" continued both in merchants' advertisements and in cabinetmakers' inventories, thus making differentiation difficult.

The availability of hard pine was steady; however, the wood was not favored by Charleston cabinetmakers. One of its undesirable properties was revealed in an October 1768 advertisement of Thomas Booth, painter from London, who informed the readers that "PINE KNOTS are well known to be very Destructive to HOUSE PAINTING, he therefore will obligate himself to stop them from Weeping, in such a Manner that the Pannel though ever so full of them, shall not be the least perceptible, though finished with the lightest of COLOURS."[9] The use of cypress and, by the 1780s, white pine apparently displaced hard pine as a softwood. However, throughout the records the ship and general building

uses for hard pine are obvious. One interesting use for exported hard pine was found in a 7 February 1795 advertisement by a lumbermill operator, Thomas Bennett, who offered his pine "For the West-India use, such as wind-mill arms, points, beams, & c. of the best pine."[10]

Since white pine is found in Charleston furniture, its importation, availability, and use in Charleston are important. The first use of white pine probably was for carving and architectural moldings; it was easy to carve and predominantly "clear," or free of knots and excessive rosin. White pine was first imported to Charleston sometime between November 1736 and March 1737/8, when 16,900 feet of "Pine Boards" were recorded as arriving in the port.[11]

The export of pine and cypress as boards, plank, and timber was, as would be expected, quite high: a total of 242,139 feet were reported in the 14 March 1737/8 *Pennsylvania Gazette* for the period between November 1736 and November 1737.[12] This evidence suggests that any importation of "pine" would have been white pine, since so much hard pine was exported that its importation would have been superfluous.

The consciousness of the use and value of white pine in Charleston at this early period is demonstrated through three land records. The first is a title exchange from William Carwithen, cabinetmaker, to Samuel Fley, carpenter, in which Carwithen grants title of property on the Edisto River to include "all White pine trees if any there should be found growing thereon." This, of course, was an erroneous statement, since the white pine will not grow in that area of the country; however, that the tree was so mentioned undoubtedly indicates either that Carwithen as a cabinetmaker did not know what white pine was, which is ridiculous, or that he was ignorant of its growth range and did indeed appreciate its value.[13] The second case found was similar. In a land record of 4 July 1739 between Captain John Allen, gentleman, and George Hunter, surveyor, of Charleston, the former transferred property to the latter, including "all white pine trees if any there should be found growing thereon."[14] The third case was a December 1745 land record between a joiner, Thomas Moses, and Thomas

Ellerbee, gentleman, in which "the white pines on the property" were specified.[15] The latter two cases also attach conditions to the chance finding of gold and silver.

The first offering of what probably was white pine by a merchant was advertised on 13 December 1742 as "plank, Boards" among other items from Boston, by Robert Pringle.[16] The next concrete evidence for the use of white pine was found on 23 February 1768 in the *Journal of the Commons House of Assembly of South Carolina,* for construction of the State House in Charleston where David Stoddard, a Charleston merchant, was to be paid "for New England Pine Plank for the Carver £55-17-19." The name of the carver was also given: "To Thomas Woodin, for Carving 16 Corinthian Capitals for the Council Chamber."[17] In July 1777 Henry Crouch, merchant, advertised "a quantity of extraordinary fine northwwd [*sic*] PINE BOARDS" as being available for sale.[18] An 11 December 1784 advertisement by William Brailsford, merchant, uses another term, "Albany Pine Boards," to describe a shipment of white pine that arrived from New York. Evidence for New York as the origin of another shipment of white pine is found in shipping records listing "1872 white pine plank" as coming from New York on 13 December 1784.[19]

New England also emerges as a source of white pine. On 9 August 1786 an advertisement by Thomas Stewart, merchant, described a shipment of white pine from Boston as "A quantity of clear and merchantable Inch Boards," along with spruce spars and a "House Frame 40 by 20." On 3 October 1786 the firm of Edward Cazneau & Co. advertised "FORTY thousand feet of excellent White Pine Boards, just arrived in the Schooner Sally ... from Portsmouth [New Hampshire]."[20]

In June 1787 "Boards, North, white pine 5/" per 100 feet were first listed against pitch pine at 6/6 in "Prices Current, Imports."[21] Throughout the rest of the eighteenth century, newspapers contain much evidence for white pine boards and plank. A good indicator of the volume of white pine that was being imported to Charleston is found in the November 1808 advertisement of "76 tons White Pine Logs" that arrived in Charleston together with boards and plank.[22]

MUSEUM OF EARLY SOUTHERN DECORATIVE

1. Little, *Atlas of United States Trees,* Maps 52-E, 54-E, 58-E, 65-E, 73-E, 74-E, 75-E; Sargent, *Manual of the Trees of North America,* 2–31; Little, *Checklist of United States Trees,* 187–99. 2. Hilton, "A Relation of a Discovery," in Salley, 44; Yeamans, "The Port Royall Discovery," in *Colonial Records of North Carolina,* 123–24. 3. Wilson, "An Account of the Province of Carolina," in Salley, 170. 4. Charleston County Wills, vols. 52–53, 1687–1710, 27 April 1692, 117–32. 5. *Ibid.,* 23 May 1694, 199–205. 6. Port of Charleston Shipping Returns, 1716–1719 and 1721–1735, entered, 25 March 1719 through mid-summer 1719. 7. Catesby, *The Natural History of Carolina, Florida, and The Bahama Islands,* in Merrens, 106. 8. *South Carolina Gazette,* 15 November 1735. 9. *South Carolina Gazette and Country Journal,* 25 October 1768. 10. *City Gazette & The Daily Advertiser,* Charleston, 7 February 1795. 11. There is some confusion over the exact date of the shipment, since the *Pennsylvania Gazette* of Philadelphia for 14 March 1737/8 listed it in its "Report of imports and exports for Port of Charles Town, 1 November 1736–1 November 1737," which in the *South Carolina Gazette* was frequently advertised at the end of February and early March 1737/8 as "To be sold at the Printing Office." 12. *Ibid.* 13. Charleston County Land Records, pt. 18, Book S, 1737–1739, 1-2 April 1737, 266–68. 14. *Ibid.,* Pt. 19, books T–W, 1739–1742 , 4 July 1739, 131. 15. *Ibid.,* pt. 33, Book 3C, 1764–1765, 12 December 1745, 571–73. 16. *South Carolina Gazette,* 13 December 1742. 17. *Journal of the Commons House of Assembly of South Carolina,* no. 37, part 2, 23 February 1768, 526–27; also see Bradford L. Rauschenberg, "The Royal Governor's Chair: Evidence for the Furnishing of South Carolina's First State House," *Journal of Early Southern Decorative Arts* VI (November 1980), 12. 18. *Gazette of the State of South Carolina,* 21 July 1777. 19. *South Carolina Gazette and Public Advertiser,* 11 December 1784; South Carolina Treasury Records, Duties on Trade at Charleston, 1784–1789, 13 December 1784, 155. 20. *Charleston Morning Post and Daily Advertiser,* 9 August 1786; 3 October 1786. 21. *Columbian Herald,* 18 June 1787. 22. *Charleston Courier,* 14 November 1808.

Poplar See *Yellow Poplar.*

Redbay See *Bay, Red.*

Satinwood Satinwood was described by Thomas Sheraton as "amongst cabinet makers, a highly valuable wood, the best of which is of a fine straw colour cast, and has therefore a cool, light, and pleasing effect on furniture."[1] Satinwood was imported to Charleston from the West and East Indies. The West Indian satinwood, *Zanthoxylum flavum,* also called yellow wood or yellow saunders, was known in England in the seventeenth century. The source was the Bermuda or Somers Islands and later Jamaica, the Dominican Republic, Cuba, Venezuela, Mexico, the West Indies, Florida, Puerto Rico, and the Bahama Islands. The wood is a creamy yellow with a greenish hue; it is heavy, brittle, and hard, with a fine texture. It turns well and finishes with a high luster;

however, it is oily in nature, which can pose a problem in gluing. Its grain, described as "wavy to roey," often determines which pieces are selected and how they are used. Sheraton described the West Indian satinwood as "less hard, more bold in figure, sometimes pailer in colour, which is a favorite quality, and more valuable than the East India wood, because of its breadth and general utility."[2]

The East Indian satinwood (*Chloroxylon swietenia*), also known as Ceylon satinwood, has been principally timbered in Ceylon and India. The properties of the wood are very similar to those of the West Indian satinwood. It is pale yellow to gold in color, frequently with darker streaks; it is hard, heavy, and brittle, with a high and satiny luster; its pronounced grain is "wavy or roey" with a ribbon figure and fine and uniform texture; it is hard to work. Sheraton described this wood as "of the hardest texture [of the two], and of a small rich figure in the grain, and I think no instance in nature, yet discovered, does not exceed the beauty of the richest sort of it.... The East India wood runs narrow, and is used in general only for cross banding."[3]

Evidence for satinwoods in Charleston is first found in a 31 January 1787 advertisement of the merchants James & Edward Penman, who offered "a (quantity) of yellow Saunders Wood, Jamaica Mahogany."[4] The 21 April 1802 arrival of the schooner *Independence* from Nassau offered the sale of "7 Logs of Satin Wood."[5] Two years later, on 10 April, a special sale, by McM. Campbell, vendue master, was held for what remained, after a private sale, of "150 pieces of fine Sattin Wood" to be sold in "lots of ten pieces or more."[6] The September 1806 inventory of the cabinetmaker Francis Joseph Lacroix revealed, among the shop-related items, "1 bundle of west india wood (50 small pieces) $14"[7] On 24 June 1809 Robert Walker bought from Charles Watts furniture hardware and "700 ft Satinwood @ 30/100 veneers casing ½ bal. 25/31.15." Alongside this entry was entered "Connecticut" without explanation.[8] In January 1810 an advertisement of Robert Walker offered "Mahogany Boards, Plank Veneers, Sattin Wood, Holly."[9] A February 1812 advertisement for the Charleston Custom House offered the cargo "of the British Cutter Elizabeth, [which had] put into this port in

distress, on her passage from Jamaica to Dublin"; the woods it carried included "3 [logs] Sattin Wood or Yellow Sanders."[10] In October 1815 and June 1817 the painter S. G. West, from Philadelphia, advertised his ability to imitate the appearance of various woods, among which "Sattin Wood" was listed.[11]

1. Sheraton, *Cabinet Dictionary,* II, 314. 2. Kribs, *Commercial Foreign Woods on the American Market,* 144–45; Hinckley, *Directory of the Historic Cabinet Woods,* 47–51; Sargent, *Manual of the Trees of North America,* 636–37; Little, *Checklist of United States Trees,* 299; Jane [1956], 15; Sheraton, *Cabinet Dictionary,* II, 314. 3. Jane, *The Structure of Wood,* 15; Kribs, *Commercial Foreign Woods on the American Market,* 141–42; Hinckley, *Directory of the Historic Cabinet Woods,* 52–53; Sheraton, *Cabinet Dictionary,* II, 314. 4. *Charleston Morning Post and Daily Advertiser,* 31 January 1787. 5. *South Carolina State Gazette and Timothy's Daily Advertiser,* Charleston, 21 April 1802. 6. *Charleston Courier,* 10 April 1804. 7. *Charleston County Inventories,* Vol. D, 1800–1810, 4 September 1806, 407. 8. Charles Watts Account Books, Book IV, 1803–1811, 62. 9. *Charleston Courier,* 9 January 1810. 10. *The Times,* Charleston, 1 February 1812. 11. *The Courier,* 16 October 1815, 2 June 1817.

Spruce Spruce (*Picea spp.*) is a softwood that grows in colder, temperate regions and is timbered on the Atlantic coast from upper New Jersey north. The prevalent species are *P. mariana* (black), *P. glauca* (white), and *P. rubens* (red). The red spruce is found southward along the high Alleghany Mountains in North Carolina, West Virginia, and Tennessee. Because of its backcountry location this wood was not timbered in the South in the eighteenth or early nineteenth centuries. Spruce attains a height of 100 feet and a trunk diameter of 2 to 3 feet. The wood is light, soft, and not strong; it is pale yellow to light red in color, and close-grained.[1]

In his 1666 description of Port Royall, Sir John Yeamans misidentified the pine growth in that area. He wrote that the pines found in the swamps were "of the sort which is called spruce.... The Pines are all Spruce."[2]

The first indication of spruce entering Charleston was found in the 5 January 1798 *South Carolina State Gazette and Timothy & Mason's Daily Advertiser,* in which "11,000 feet of Eastern Pine and Spruce BOARDS and PLANK" were advertised as having arrived from Portsmouth, New Hampshire, and available at Beale's Wharf. A few years later, on 23 February 1810, the *Charleston Courier* noted the arrival of a schooner from the Kennebeck River in Maine, containing "Spruce Spars and Poles, Rough White Oak and Ash Hand

Spikes." On 20 August 1817 Lewis Daniell, lumber merchant, advertised white pine boards and "10,000 [feet) Spruce Sheathing ... 25,000 Spruce Plastering Laths."

1. Sargent, *Manual of the Trees of North America*, I, 34–39; Little, *Atlas of United States Trees*, I Maps 38-E, 39-E, 41-E; Little, *Checklist of United States Trees*, 184–87. 2. Yeamans, "The Port Royall Discovery," 123–24. 3. *Southern Patriot and Commercial Advertiser*, 20 August 1817.

Sweet Gum See Gum, Sweet.

Walnut Walnut (*Juglans nigra*), also called black walnut, has a growth range from western Vermont south to western Florida and west to Minnesota and western Oklahoma. Little states that walnut does not grow in the lower Mississippi Valley, the Gulf Coast region, most of Florida, south-eastern Georgia, the lower half of South Carolina, and the headwaters of the Cape Fear. In South Carolina, the climate and sandy soil conditions apparently restrict its distribution to 100 miles or more inland. Walnut grows to 150 feet at times, with a trunk diameter of 4 to 6 feet in diameter. The wood is heavy, strong, hard, and coarse-grained; it is dark brown or purplish-lavender in color, with lighter-colored sapwood.[1]

The early descriptions of Carolina include walnut or, according to several sources, "black walnut." Ashe wrote that "Black Walnut for it's Grain, is most esteem'd."[2] Mathews and Samuel Wilson both referred to black walnut in 1671 and 1682, respectively.[3] Since walnut was not growing in the Low Country, their descriptions were either of Carolina as a whole or propaganda.

The desirability of black walnut, or more specifically "Virginia Black Walnut," was recognized early. The Englishman William Strachey wrote in 1630 of "the black walnutt, which is returned home [England) yearly by all shipping from thence [Virginia], and yields good profit, for yt is well brought up to make waynscott, tables, cubbordes, chairs and stools of a delicate grayne and cullour like ebonie, and not subject to worms."[4] Virginia is frequently referred to in correspondence as a source for black walnut; on 5 June 1682 William Fitzhugh, Virginia planter and politician, wrote to John Cooper, London factor, "I was intended to have sent you

ten thousand Pipe staves, & four hundred feet of two inch black Wallnut Plank, but could not get freight for them."[5] Mark Catesby (1731) described the black walnut as growing "in most parts of Northern continent of America. Abundant in Virginia and Maryland and grows to Vast size towards the heads of rivers. Color of wood approaches nearer to black than any other wood. Esteemed for Making cabinets, tables, etc."[6]

By the 1770s the use of Virginia walnut in Britain had declined. In an 8 July 1772 letter from George F. Norton, in London, to his brother John Hatley Norton, a Yorktown, Virginia, merchant, he seems to have turned down a request to have chairs made of Walnut: "the Cabinet maker says the Walnut Tree Wood is very scarce (little of it being used here) & that it should take some time to season it after tis cut out, upon these assurances, & that Mahogany Wood is very cheap."[7] The *Charleston Evening Gazette* of 17 December 1785 carried the "Sales By Auction of Merchandise at Garroway's Coffee House London Sept. 20, 21–22" in which "404 Pieces of American Oak" were sold and "2 Logs Virginia Walnut-Tree at 3d per foot."

Thomas Sheraton, in 1803, described the walnut tree as of three species: "The English walnut, and the white and black Virginia. Hickery is reckoned to class with the white Virginia walnut. The black Virginia was much in use for cabinet work about forty or fifty years since in England, but is now quite laid aside since the introduction of mahogany. The common English walnut tree is much paler than the Virginia, and cannot be used but for the most common purposes."[8]

The first mention of walnut as lumber in Charleston was on 24 June 1734, when the schooner *Providence*, from North Carolina, arrived with "234 foot Walnut Board." This might have been cut in North Carolina.[9] An advertisement of 17 July 1736 by Richard Marten, painter and glazier, offered to paint in imitation of "Marble, Walnut, Oak, Cedar, &c."[10] On 8 February 1737 the sloop *Molly* of Philadelphia entered Charleston with "63 Walnut Planks" intended for Dover, England.[11]

The first Charleston cabinetmaker to be documented as having walnut in stock was Thomas Blythe, who on 14 June 1738 mort-

gaged his "working tools" and related stock, among which was listed "walnuld Tree Boards" with the furniture parts and other woods.[12] On 19 April 1749 the coachmaker Benjamin Heap's estate sale included "8 Walnut boards" among other wood.[13] After this date, walnut was not found advertised or in the records in Charleston.

1. Sargent, *Manual of the Trees of North America*, 169, 171–72; Little, *Atlas of United States Trees*, Map 134-E; Little, *Checklist of United States Trees*, 153; Hinckley, *Directory of the Historic Cabinet Woods*, 104–113. 2. Ashe, "Carolina, or a Description of the Present State of that Country," in Salley, 143. 3. Mathews to Lord Ashley, in *Collections of the South Carolina Historical Society*, 354; Wilson, "An Account of the Province of Carolina," in Salley, 170. 4. Quoted in Helen Lowenthal, "History in Houses," *The Magazine ANTIQUES*, May 1972, 868. 5. Richard Beale Davis, *William Fitzhugh and His Chesapeake World* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press: 1963), 126. 6. Catesby, *Natural History of Carolina*, vol. II, in Merrens. 7. Frances Norton Mason, *John Norton & Sons, Merchants of London and Virginia* (Richmond, Va.: Dietz Press, 1937), 252. 8. Sheraton, *Cabinet Dictionary*, II, 331. 9. South Carolina Shipping Returns, December 1721–December 1735, 24 June 1734. 10. *South Carolina Gazette*, 17 July 1736. 11. South Carolina Shipping Returns, March 1736–January 1764, 8 February 1737. 12. Charleston County Mortgages, No. N.N., 1738–1739, 14 June 1738, p. 9. 13. Charleston County Wills, vol. 77B, 1748–1751, 19 April 1749, p. 675.

Yellow Poplar Yellow Poplar (*Liriodendron Tulipifera*) is also known as tulip tree, whitewood, tulip poplar, or simply poplar. It is distributed over the eastern half of the United States and along the coast, including Charleston. The tree attains a height of almost 200 feet and a trunk diameter of 8 to 10 feet. The wood is light, soft, brittle, and of fine uniform texture, but not strong; it has a straight grain, is easy to work, and is light yellow to brown in color with a white sapwood.[1]

The poplar tree was listed by Yeamans in 1666, Mathews in 1671, and Wilson in 1682; Bolzius described poplars in 1751 as "of good width and height, and make good boards."[2] Drayton in 1802 wrote of them, "These are beautiful flowering tall straight growing trees, generally found in mellow land, inclining to moist. They grow throught the state. In the upper country they grow on high land, as well as in low situations; and far outstrip those of the lower country. Some of their stems are said to be eighteen or twenty feet in circumference; and their height, in such cases, is from seventy to one hundred feet; one half of which distance, the stem is without

branches. The wood of this tree is used in planks, or wainscot work."[3] Thomas Sheraton (1803) listed five poplars; the fifth was the "Carolina poplar."[4]

In April 1692 the Charleston merchant Wilson Dunston's shop inventory contained wood, among which was "29 popler planke at £1.15."[5] The first cabinetmaker found in conjunction with yellow poplar was Robert Liston, whose c. 1760 inventory contained "A parcel of Poplar Plank £5," along with mahogany and his shop-related items.[6] In January 1762, the coachmaker Robert Hardy's inventory contained "7 Poplar Boards for pannels £4" and "3 Poplar Planks @ 60/pr. Hundd."[7] A 1764 court case revealed that in June and October 1761 the carpenter partnership of William Axson and Nathan Clive purchased "45 feet poplar plank" and "70 feet poplar" from the cabinetmaker Farquar McGillivray.[8] Another coachmaker's inventory, that of Samuel Perkins from June 1764, listed "Poplar wood & boards" along with oak and ash.[9] The inventory of the turner, joiner, and cabinetmaker John Story from September 1767 contained "A parcel of Mahognay & poplar Boards" among his shop items.[10]

Thomas Elfe's account book recorded several sales of poplar. The first was in April 1768 for "106 feet of poplar plank @ 95 per hundred £50.14.7" from Will Roper, merchant (Account #46). The shop account (#63) was charged as paying "Felix Varley for a poplar plank £34.10.9" on 20 March 1772, 9 September 1773 for "mahogany & poplar sold" £12.6", and 29 March 1774 "for poplar £7." Elfe's 11 September 1776 inventory revealed "17 poplar plank £9" among the woods listed.[11]

The inventories of other coachmakers also indicate that they used yellow poplar: Michael Williams from 1771, Richard Hart from 1774, Benjamin Casey from 1806, and James O'Reilly from 1821.[12] The 8 April 1803 advertisement of Gordon and Miller, merchants, offered "poplar and pine boards ... on hand."[13] On 23 December 1806 the contents of the schooner *Two Brothers,* which had arrived two days earlier from New York, was sold; it included "20,000 feet white pine BOARDS and a quantity of white wood boards." The latter might be assumed to be yellow poplar.[14] On 25 June 1807 an advertisement for the Washo sawmill, on the south

branch of Santee River, offered to purchase cypress and poplar.[15] On 21 November 1814 John Harth, lumberyard proprietor, advertised poplar for sale.[16]

1. Sargent, *Manual of the Trees of North America,* 351–52; Little, *Atlas of United States Trees,* Map 137-E; Little, *Checklist of United States Trees,* 163; Hinckley, *Directory of the Historic Cabinet Woods,* 44–45. **2.** Yeamans, "The Port Royall Discovery," in *Colonial Records of North Carolina,* 123; Mathews to Lord Ashley, in *Collections of the South Carolina Historical Society,* 354; Wilson, "An Account of the Province of Carolina," in Salley, 170; Bolzius, part I, 237. **3.** Drayton, *A View of South-Carolina,* 73. **4.** Sheraton, *Cabinet Dictionary,* 291. **5.** Charleston County Wills, vols. 52–53, 1687–1710, 27 April 1692, pp. 117–32. **6.** *Ibid.,* vol. 85B, 1758–1761, n.d., p. 572. **7.** *Ibid.,* vol. 87A, 1761–1763, 20 January 1762, p. 170. **8.** South Carolina Court of Common Pleas, Judgement Rolls, Box 59A, #18A, Farquar McGillivray, 10 December 1764. **9.** Charleston County Wills, vol. 88A, 1763–1767, 12 June 1764, p. 239. **10.** Charleston County Inventories, 1763–1771, 8 September 1767, pp. 11–13. **11.** Charleston County Wills, Etc., Vol. 99A, 1776–1778, 11 September 1776, p. 116. **12.** *Ibid.,* vol. 94, 1771–1774, 28 December 1771; n.d. [March 1774]; *City Gazette and Daily Advertiser,* 4 August 1806; *The Times,* 20 January 1821. **13.** *Charleston Courier,* 8 April 1803. **14.** *Ibid.,* 23 December 1806. **15.** *The Times,* 25 June 1807. **16.** *Charleston Courier,* 21 November 1814.

Bradford L. Rauschenberg is the Director of Research for Old Salem and MESDA.

MEMBERSHIP IN MESDA

Members of MESDA receive the *Journal of Early Southern Decorative Arts,* published in May and November, and the MESDA newsletter, the *Luminary,* published in February and August. Other privileges include notification of the classes, programs, and lectures offered by the museum, participation in Members' Weekend, with symposium on collecting and decorative arts research, a 10% discount on bookstore purchases, and free admission to general tours of MESDA and Old Salem.

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES

Benefactor*	
Patron	$500 and up
Sustaining	$100–499
Corporate or Foundation	$150 and up
Supporting	$50 to $99
Family	$40
Individual	$30
Library (Journal only)	$25

*Persons who contribute valuable antiquities to MESDA are considered Benefactors. Once named a Benefactor, a person remains such for life and enjoys all privileges of membership in MESDA.

Overseas members please add $10.00 for airmail postage.

For further information about benefits of membership, please write the Membership Coordinator, MESDA, P.O. Box 10310, Winston-Salem, North Carolina 27108-0310. Telephone (910) 721-7360.

THE MUSEUM OF EARLY SOUTHERN DECORATIVE ARTS

HOBART G. CAWOOD, *President, Old Salem, Inc.*

FRANK L. HORTON, *Director Emeritus*

SALLY GANT, *Director, Education and Special Events*
RUTH BROOKS, *Associate in Education*

PAULA Y. HOOPER, *Coordinator of Membership Services*

PAULA LOCKLAIR, *Director, Department of Collections*
JOHANNA METZGAR, *Assistant Curator and Registrar*
JENNIFER ABER, *Collections Assistant*

BRADFORD L. RAUSCHENBERG, *Director, Department of Research*
NANCY BEAN, *Office Manager*
SANDRA HENDEE, *Prints and Slides Assistant*
RICHARD MURDOCH, *Librarian*
MARTHA ROWE, *Research Associate*
WESLEY STEWART, *Photographer*
CORNELIA B. WRIGHT, *Editor of Publications*